

OPPORTUNITY **Russia**

BILATERAL
**GROWING BEYOND
TRADITIONAL TIES**

INVESTMENT
**RUSSIA LOOKING EAST FOR MORE
OPPORTUNITIES & INVESTMENTS**

ECONOMY
**SPIEF 2014: SUSTAINING
GLOBAL ECONOMY TRANSFORMATION**

SPORTS
CELEBRATING SOCHI OLYMPICS



A PUBLICATION BY THE EMBASSY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, SINGAPORE

Best wishes for Russia on National Day!



S G X

Mainboard-listed Food Empire Holdings (Food Empire) is a global branding and manufacturing company in the food and beverage sector.

Its products include instant beverage products,

frozen convenience food, confectionery and snack food. Food Empire's products are exported to over 60 countries, in markets such as Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, China, Indochina, the Middle East, Mongolia and the US. The Group has 19 offices (representative and liaison) worldwide. The Group operates five manufacturing facilities in Singapore, Russia, Ukraine, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Food Empire's products include a wide variety of beverages, such as regular and flavoured coffee mixes and cappuccinos, chocolate drinks and flavoured fruit teas. It also markets instant breakfast cereal, potato crisps and assorted frozen convenience foods. Food Empire's strength lies in its proprietary brands – including MacCoffee, Petrovskaya Sloboda, Klassno, Hyson, OrienBites and Kracks. MacCoffee – the Group's flagship brand – has been consistently ranked as the leading 3-in-1 instant coffee brand in the Group's core market of Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

The Group employs sophisticated brand building activities, localized to match the flavor of the local markets in which its products are sold. Since its public listing in 2000, Food Empire has won numerous accolades including being selected as one of the "Most Valuable Singapore Brands"; ranked as one of "The Strongest Singapore Brands"; Forbes Magazine also named Food Empire twice, as one of the "Best under a Billion" companies in Asia.



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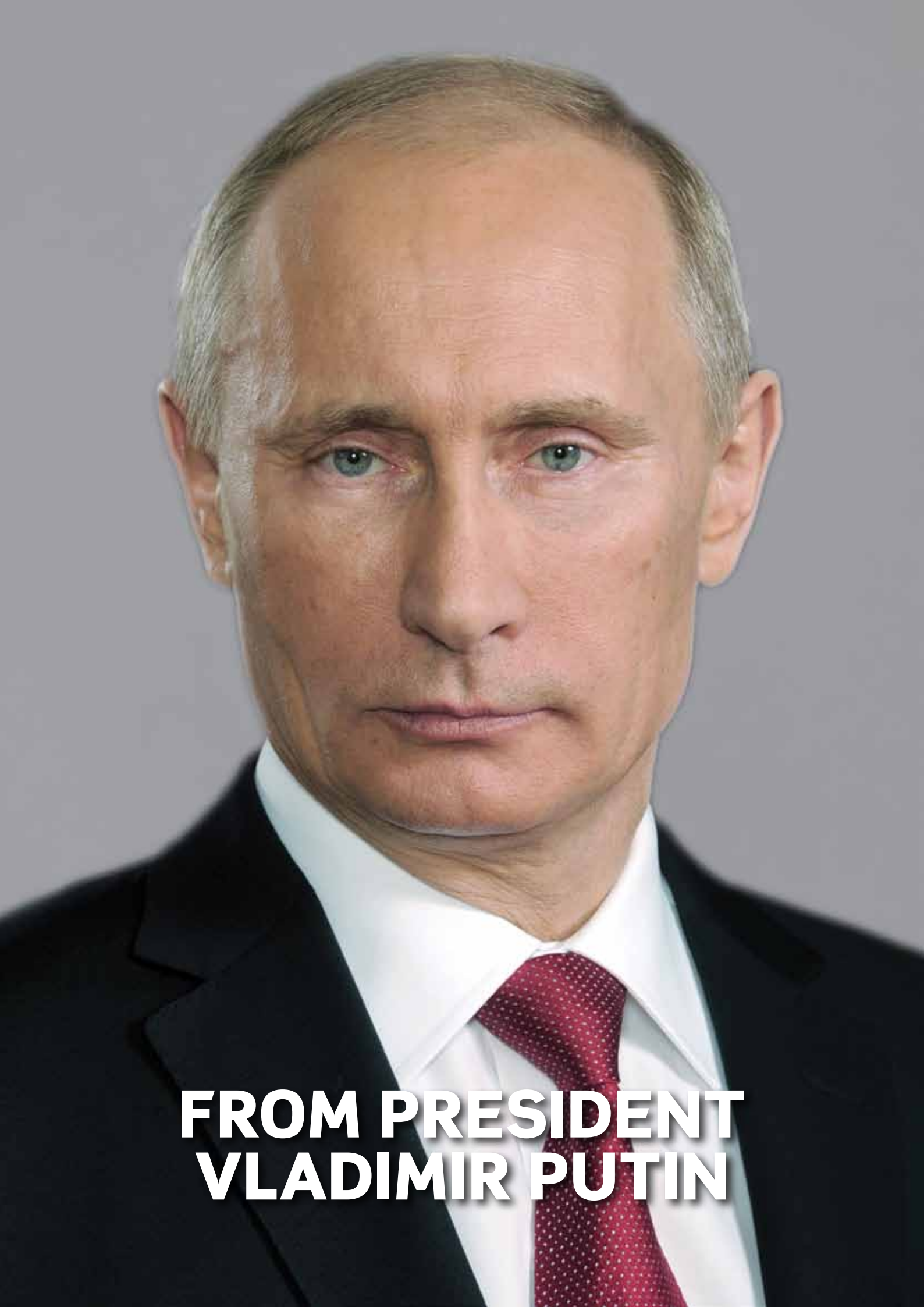
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**FROM PRESIDENT
VLADIMIR PUTIN**



Excerpt of President Vladimir Putin's address to the Annual Congress of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP)

Our common goal is to ensure a new quality of our economy, to develop national industry. This is the driving force of long-term economic growth, scientific progress and resolution of social issues. This means new jobs, in other words – a chance for millions of our citizens to use their potential and have a decent income. This also means creating new centres of advanced growth and achieving the overall development of the regions on the huge expanses of our country.

Russia should be competitive in terms of all the key parameters of the business environment. Therefore, we will continue creating the most favourable conditions for investment, for the establishment of new production facilities and for training skilled personnel.

We will provide the necessary support to our companies, including in terms of entering global markets; we will defend their interests using the mechanisms of the WTO and other legal procedures. We proceed from the notion that the competitiveness of domestic business is the cornerstone of the nation's competitiveness in general.

However, as we have often discussed, entrepreneurs need to understand their responsibility. Our priority stance is that Russian companies have to be registered here, in their home country and have a transparent ownership structure. I am certain that this is in your interests too. This is why we set the task of de-offshoring the national economy and are drafting necessary amendments to the regulatory framework. I believe that we will return to this subject today both in this broad group and in more private discussions after this meeting.

There is one thing, however, that I would like to note. Our

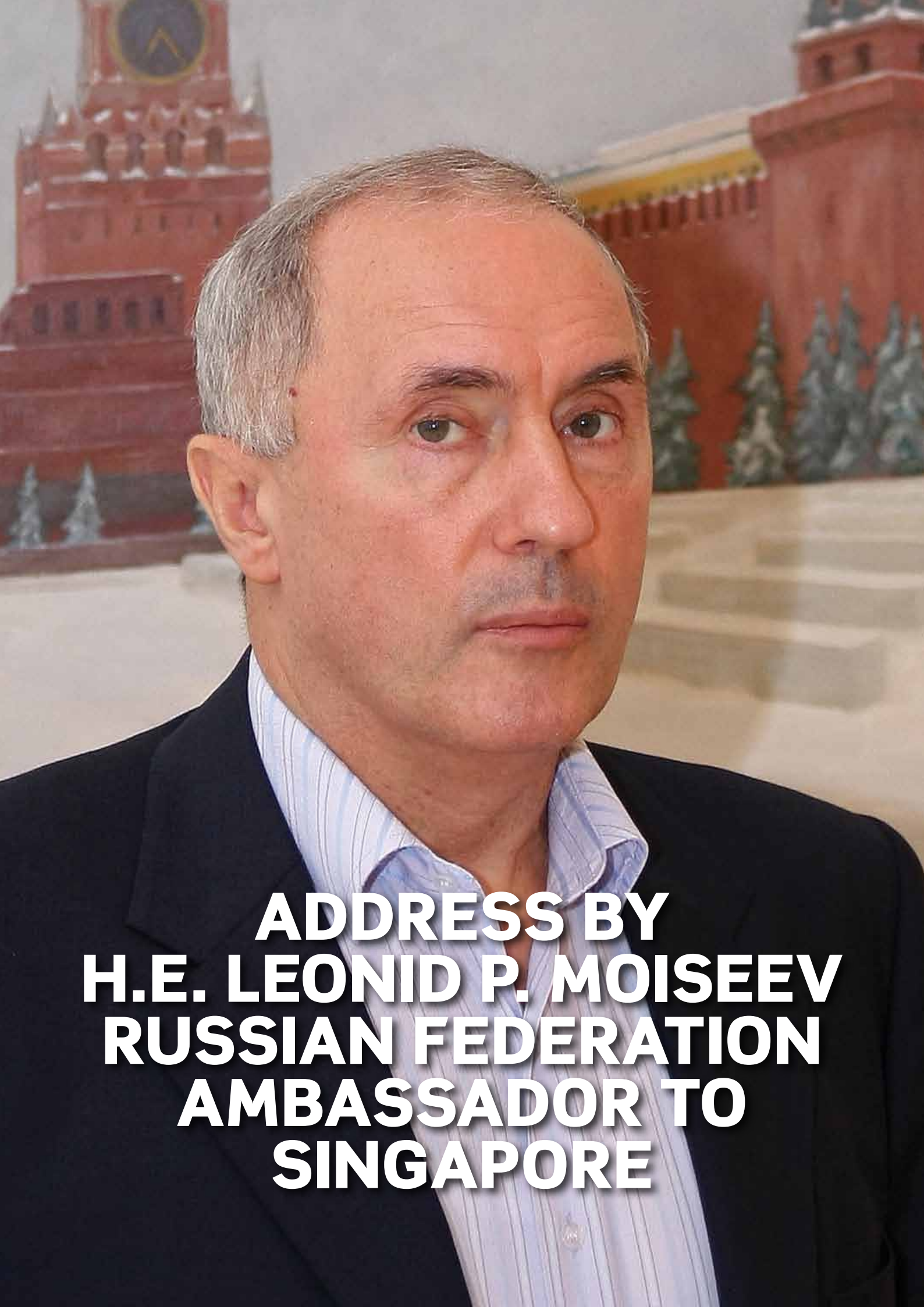
goal is not merely to limit the possibilities of using offshore schemes. We know that we will not get anywhere by simply banning things. Our efforts are mainly directed at making Russian jurisdiction more attractive, at improving business climate, strengthening legal guarantees of property protection, and improving the judiciary, including courts of arbitration. We will work on all these issues consistently and I expect to be working in close contact with you as well.

Naturally, once national companies start paying taxes in Russia, once they stop evading any responsibility for this country, this would lead to the growth of overall trust in business in general (I am sure you understand this too), trust in private property and values of economic and business freedom. This is key to the progressive development of our nation.

Regarding the creation of the necessary business climate. We have done a lot in this regard, I believe, and what is important – there are results. We have done this together with the RSPP, with the ASI (Agency for Strategic Initiative) and with other business associations. I will repeat: there is progress, there are some positive results.

Naturally, a lot remains to be done. We will work together, because without your direct involvement, without feedback from you on the results of what is going on we cannot be efficient. We can only do this together. We are just as interested in achieving this as you are and we will work together. However, we expect this joint effort to continue.

As for the national rating of our regions' economic attractiveness, I hope we will continue this effort. I repeat, just as in our other efforts we can only make this work if we do it together.



**ADDRESS BY
H.E. LEONID P. MOISEEV
RUSSIAN FEDERATION
AMBASSADOR TO
SINGAPORE**

Russia and Singapore share many common interests and enjoy excellent relations, which have grown stronger and become more multi-faceted in recent years.

Close collaborations between the two countries include the High-level Russia-Singapore Inter-Governmental Commission that remains the cornerstone of bilateral cooperation and the Russia-Singapore Business Forum, which has facilitated business tie-ups and networking opportunities between the two countries.

On the regional level the two nations also work closely at regional forums, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, which Russia hosted in 2012, the East Asia Summit, and the Asia-Europe Meeting.

In recognition of the great personal contribution to the development of cooperation between Russia and Singapore, Russian President Vladimir Putin in September 2013 awarded former Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew the Order of Honour of the Russian Federation.

After the first visit of the President of Russia to Singapore in 2009, trade between Singapore and Russia is booming, with annual increase in volume reaching up to 30 in recent years. Singapore is one of the biggest and most reliable trade partners for Russia in South-East Asia. Several big Singapore companies are operating in various regions of Russia; there are already 400 Russian companies based in Singapore.

Changi Airports International invested in reconstruction of four Russian airports in Northern Caucasus Region, thus contributing to the success of the Sochi Winter Olympics.

Jurong Consultants has been appointed a master planner of the Russian Special Economic Zone of Moglino in the North-West region of Pskov, near the borders of Latvia, Estonia and Belarus. There is a lot of potential in this part of Russia – it has a good geographic position, natural resources and reliable infrastructure that is already in place. It also has one of the lowest levels of labour cost in Europe, but this doesn't mean lower quality – three-quarters of those employed are college or university graduates. The Moglino SEZ also has support from the federal and state governments, which means it is easier to get things done there.

In an effort to take advantage of the opening up of the northern sea route linking the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans as a result of global warming, Russia has adopted a go-east strategy. The Far Eastern Federal District of Russia has huge oil reserves, minerals, forestry and fishery resources, while the Siberian Federal District has oil and natural gas, coal reserves, minerals and virgin forests. Russia is keen to encourage not only new oil routes but broader economic integration by developing sectors such as manufacturing and services in its eastern territories. Last year, Russia established special Ministry for development of the Far Eastern Region with three offices – in Moscow, Khabarovsk and Vladivostok. Vladivostok, which is the closest Russian

city to Singapore, hosts one of the most modern airports in Russia ready to welcome 2.5 millions of passengers a year. Vladivostok, the starting point for Asia-Pacific countries to take the Arctic route to Europe, has rapidly expanding port facilities and is embarking on an ambitious path to develop fish and food processing hubs, tourism oil-refining. One of the biggest casinos in Russia is already under construction near Vladivostok.

Singapore with Russian support joined the Arctic Council as a permanent observer last year along with China, India, Japan, South Korea and Italy. The council, formed in 1996, groups the eighth Arctic nations – Russia, the US, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Arctic developments have important implications for Singapore. Given its knowledge and expertise in offshore and maritime work, maritime transportation and shipping, Singapore can contribute directly to Arctic projects. Keppel Offshore & Marine has already completed contracts to deliver the first ice-class supply vessel to Russian Lukoil Oil Company and has secured three more to build two ice-class supply vessels and an ice-class multi-purpose duty-rescue vessel to support platforms operating off the coast of Russia. They will provide year-round services such as the delivery of cargo, salvage, search and rescue functions, fire-fighting operations, and towing and tanker mooring operations.

Singapore is becoming an attractive destination for many Russians who want to get world-class education or find a good job. One of several dozens world-class Russian scientists working in Singapore universities, Boris Lukyanchuk last year received the President's Award for his research in the field of data storage.

Russian-speaking community in Singapore is fast growing, standing now at about five thousand. There is a constant surge in number of Russian tourists visiting Singapore. Russians actively contribute to local cultural life. Best Russian pianists and violinists, as well as conductors regularly perform in the Esplanade, Conservatory or SOTA. The "Swan Lake" ballet by the Bolshoi of Moscow was one of the most dazzling event for ballet-lovers last year. Russian saxophonist Igor Butman with trumpeter Vadim Eilenkrig performed compositions by Russian composer Enri Lolashvili and Singapore jazz maestro Jeremy Montiero with local jazz quartet.

Since 2011, Singapore company Educare is engaged in enhancing teaching quality, professional development and capacity building of master teachers in the Russian Republic of Tatarstan. The aim is to cascade Educare's professional development programmes to more than 30,000 teachers in Tatarstan.

Russian tall ship "Pallada" during its annual port calls at Singapore, takes on board for a short sea-going practice dozens of Singapore students.

These are only some of the examples of growing relations between Russian and Singapore which, I am sure, are bound to further expand and flourish in the years to come.



Russia-Singapore Business Forum Guest of Honour, Mr Rustam Minnikhanov, the President of Tatarstan, Russia

GROWING BEYOND TRADITIONAL BILATERAL TIES

Singapore and Russia are taking their economic collaboration to the next level by joining hands in diverse fields

Being a long standing partner and collaborator, friendship between Singapore and Russia has further broadened and deepened in scope over the last decade. Sharing several common interests and actively participating in many areas of business and trade, the 46-years old bond has gone well beyond conventional collaborations and is now being extended into education, arts, culture and tourism. The past year saw several high level government visits and inter government discussions along with huge participation by both countries at the G-20 summit. Opportunity Russia brings you a detailed synopsis of the various bilateral events and tie-ups between Russia and Singapore.

DPM Tharman Shanmugaratnam 5-day visit to Russia

On his five day visit to Russia from 18 to 22 June 2013, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Tharman Shanmugaratnam co-chaired the fourth session of the high-level

Russia Singapore Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) along with Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov on 19 June 2013 at St Petersburg.

DPM Tharman was accompanied at the IGC by Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs Grace Fu, Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry and Senior Minister of State for National Development Lee Yi Shyan, Minister of State for Health and Minister of State for Manpower Dr Amy Khor, and Minister of State for Finance and Minister of State for Transport Josephine Teo. A business delegation jointly led by International Enterprise (IE) Singapore and Singapore Business Federation (SBF), as well as officials from various agencies also joined him.

DPM Tharman also participated in the St Petersburg International Economic Forum on 20 June where he gave a speech on "Making the Tough Decisions

in Reforming Global Finance". On the following day, DPM paid a visit to Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan at the invitation of President of the Republic of Tatarstan, Rustam Minnikhanov. His visit to Kazan focused on economic opportunities for Singapore.

Fourth session of Russia-Singapore IGC

At the fourth session of the Russia Singapore IGC, Singapore DPM Tharman and his Russian counterpart DPM Shuvalov reviewed the growing bilateral relations between the two countries and invited proposals for more business collaboration in specific cities and regions including Moscow, St Petersburg, the Republic of Tatarstan, Krasnodar, Pskov and the Russian Far East. They further noted growing scope for collaboration in the following areas:

- Changi Airport Group's joint ventures with Russian companies to manage Vladivostok International Airport and to operate airports in the Krasnodar

region ahead of the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014

- Urban management and e-Government, including the design of integrated transport systems and intelligent traffic management (discussions with IDA International and ST Electronics)
- Development and management of Special Economic Zones (involving further engagement by Jurong Consultants in Pskov region and RSP Architects Planners and Engineers in Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan)
- Development of townships with high quality living environments (e.g. an initiative by joint venture comprising RSP Architects Planners and Engineers and Amtel Properties in Pulkovskie Hills, St Petersburg)
- Potential for further collaboration with the stock exchanges
- Healthcare and education, including cooperation between NUS and the Far Eastern Federal University, as well as Educare's efforts in training of master teachers in the Republic of Tatarstan
- With respect to cultural exchanges, visit of Moscow's renowned Bolshoi Ballet to Singapore in November 2013

The previous IGC which was held in September 2012, had facilitated and promoted cooperation between Singapore and Russia across a broad front, such as in trade and investment, information and communication technology, industrial parks, transport, health care and education. Of particular interest is the successful conclusion of air talks in February 2013, which liberalised air services between Singapore and Russia.

The fourth session of IGC successfully concluded with the signing of several Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs):

- MOU on cooperation in the fields of e-Governance, intelligent traffic systems, public safety, capacity building and development and training between IDA International and the Ministry of Information and Communication of the Republic of Tatarstan

- MOU between ST Electronics and the Ministry of Information and Communications of the Republic of Tatarstan, on collaboration in the areas of intelligent transport systems, decision support systems, communications and security
- Jurong Consultants and Moglino SEZ signed an MOU which expands the established cooperation to develop and manage SEZs in the Pskov region in Russia

Joint business mission to Russia by IE Singapore & SBF

International Enterprise (IE) Singapore and Singapore Business Forum (SBF) led a joint business mission to St Petersburg and Kazan to explore collaborative partnerships in conjunction with the fourth Russia-Singapore IGC. Comprising nine companies from the architectural, education, electronics, information communication technologies and urban solutions sectors, the mission discussed their expertise and business interests in Russia.

Pointing out the long term growth potential of business relations with Russia, Ms Kathy Lai, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, IE Singapore said, "As Russia restructures its economy to attract foreign investments, it will also translate into immediate opportunities for Singapore companies in master

planning, education and infocomm technology (ICT)."

Adding to Ms Lai's observation Mr HoMeng Kit, Chief Executive Officer, SBF, said, "Russia's official ascension to the World Trade Organisation last August was 19 years in the making. I believe that this watershed moment will pave the way for a new chapter in Russia's international trade and investment profile, and bilateral exchanges will stand to benefit in the long run."

President Putin meets Y20 participants at SPIEF 2013

During his meeting at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), Russian President Vladimir Putin met with leaders of youth delegations of the Y20 Russia 2013 Summit from the "Group of Eight" countries on 20 June 2013 and invited countries - Singapore, Spain, Ethiopia, Brunei, Kazakhstan and Senegal.

The Y20 delegation presented the final declaration of the Youth Summit, or the Communiqué, to Russian President where he commented on each of the recommendations written in the Communiqué and stated that the proposals of young delegates are truly mature. He further promised to promote the ideas of the young generation to his colleagues at the Leaders' summit.



Mr. Oleg G. Savelyev, Russia's First Deputy Minister for Ministry of Economic Development at the Business Opportunities Seminar organised by Singapore Manufacturing Federation. (Source: S'pore Manufacturing Federation)

SMF 'Business Opportunities in Russia' networking session

The business networking session organised by SMF on 26 November 2013 was graced by Mr. Oleg G. Savelyev, First Deputy Minister for Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation. Over 60 participants attended the session where avenues for business expansion and collaboration across various regions of Russian Federation were discussed. In his address to the participants, Mr Savelyev observed, "Singapore has a modernised economy equipped with advanced technology. This has attracted many countries to expand their business network to Singapore. We would like to encourage Singapore companies to look into business expansion to Russia. We look forward to greater joint cooperation between Singapore and Russian Federation."

Sergey Pernikov, Vice-Governor, Russian Federation Administration of Pskov Region also encouraged Singaporean companies to invest in Pskov region, "We hope the joint project with Jurong Consultants would boost the contacts and relationship between Pskov region and Singapore. We are delighted to learn the best practices from Singapore companies and implement it. We hope the collaboration with SMF could establish stronger relationship in the future."

G-20 Commended at St Petersburg Summit

The G-20 Summit hosted by the Russian Federation on 5-6 September 2013 saw participation from Singapore, which is one of six non-member countries invited. Held at the Konstantin Palace in St Petersburg, the Summit saw the Island country share its view on an international platform to contribute to economic growth as well as a more stable global financial system.

At the summit, The Global Governance Group (3G) comprising Member States of the United Nations, which included Singapore, commended the efforts of the G-20 in addressing the problems facing the global economy. In a statement to the press, the group said, "We recognize that global growth continues to be weak and unemployment remains high in many countries. We therefore strongly support the G-20 in implementing ambitious

“We are seeing increased investment activity as well, with growing interest among Russian companies in Singapore and vice versa”

*Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam
Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister*

structural reforms to increase growth potential and create jobs. We appreciate Russia's efforts to build on practices by previous G-20 Chairs in engaging the broader UN membership and for inviting the 3G to participate in its meetings."

On 29 November 2013, a news conference highlighting the outcomes of Russia's G20 Presidency year and priority strands of Russia's further participation in the G20 activities was held in Moscow. At the event, Deputy Chief of the Presidential Experts' Directorate, the Russian G20 Sherpa Svetlana Lukash said, "Russia's leadership received high evaluation from all the partners and brought about a number of significant results for Russia and the global economy on the whole. The key result of the Summit was adoption of the St Petersburg Action Plan, which defines the G20 strategy on achieving strong, sustainable and balanced growth. Likewise, within the year of the Russian

Presidency implementation of previous commitments has been reviewed and analysed."

The conference also marked the official passing of the G20 Presidency over to Australia, starting from 1 December, 2013.

Russia-Singapore Business Forum (RSBF) in Singapore

The eighth edition of the three-day RSBF successfully held on 24-26 September, 2013 at the Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre saw participation from over 300 delegates from both countries. It was graced by Guests of Honour, Mr Rustam Minnikhanov, the President of Tatarstan, Russia and Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

In his speech, the DPM said, "We are seeing increased investment activity as well, with growing interest among Russian companies in Singapore and vice versa. There are now more than 400 Russian companies in Singapore, up from just over a hundred five years ago." He further emphasised the huge progress witnessed on the bilateral front between the two countries and added, "There is considerable opportunity for further progress, in economic and business collaboration and also in softer areas such as education, arts and culture."



Singapore sent a mission to Russia last June (Source: Singapore Business Federation)



RUSSIA'S ORDER OF HONOUR FOR FORMER SINGAPORE PM LEE KUAN YEW

The Russian Federation's top honour was conferred on Mr Lee by Russian President Vladimir Putin last September

Underpinning the cordial relations shared between Singapore and Russia, former Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew was presented with Russia's Order of Honour at the Istana by His Excellency Mr Leonid Moiseev, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Singapore on 6 January 2014.

President of the Russian Federation, Mr Vladimir Putin, signed a decree on 11 September 2013 to award the Order of Honour to Mr Lee for his substantial contribution to strengthening friendship and cooperation with the Russian Federation and development of scientific and cultural relations. The award was also presented in conjunction with Mr Lee's 90th birthday in 2013.

According to the statements released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore and Russia enjoy excellent relations supported by regular high-level exchanges between the two countries and through institutional linkages such as the Russia-Singapore Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) and the Russia-Singapore Business Forum (RSBF). "Singapore will continue to forge closer cooperation with Russia for the mutual benefit of our countries," said MFA in a press statement.

Mr Lee in the past has been recipient of a number of state decorations including the Order of the Companions of

Honour (Commonwealth Realms) and Order of the Rising Sun (Japan). Widely respected in Singapore and across the world for his three decades of leadership, he is often referred as the founding father of modern Singapore.

The Order of Honour is awarded to foreigners for special accomplishments in development of bilateral relations with the Russian Federation and to Russians citizens who have contributed to their country. Others who have received the decoration include Juan Antonio Samaranch, Spanish ambassador to the Soviet Union and Mongolia in 1977 and President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), held in Moscow in 1980.

More about the Order of Honour

A state order of the Russian Federation, the Order of Honour was established by the President's decree No. 442 of March 2, 1994. The Russian Federation Order of Honour provides continuity from the Soviet Union's identically named Order.

It is awarded to Russian citizens for high achievements in the state, scientific research, socio-cultural contributions, production, public and charitable activities and activities which essentially improve the conditions of life of people.



IMPROVING INVESTMENT CLIMATE BY MODERNISING RUSSIAN ECONOMY

In light of the global financial crisis, the Government of the Russian Federation is focused on implementing slew of measures to improve the investment climate, attract foreign investment and boost the economy

Policies are being introduced to ease the tax burden of foreign economic operators and the launch of a Direct Investment Fund for co-financing foreign capital expenditures in the Russian economy.

Alongside foreign capital, domestic sources of growth are also being engaged. In particular, 15 billion USD from the Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) will be spent on large-scale infrastructure projects such as the construction of Moscow-Kazan high-speed railway line, building of the Moscow Central Circular Road and reconstruction of Trans-Siberian Railway line. Furthermore, Russia's participation in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as well as its rapprochement with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is having a positive effect on investors' mood. Administrative reforms reducing bureaucratic red tape in economic affairs which impede foreign investors' activity are being introduced to give impetus to the growing economy.

In addition to this, the Government is also privatising state-owned assets, which according to preliminary estimates will bring approximately 50 billion USD to the federal budget in 2013-2016. Decision has also been made to limit the growth of regulated tariffs of infrastructure monopolies' and to keep it within the actual inflation rate of the previous year. This rule will be valid for five years starting from 2014.

However capital outflow from the domestic economy still remains an issue. In an effort to tackle this phenomenon, President of the Russian Federation, H.E. Mr. Vladimir Putin, in his Address to the Federal Assembly on 12 December 2013

set the task of de-offshorisation of the national economy. Among proposed steps are levying taxes on offshore-registered Russian companies owned by Russian citizens and banning foreign-based companies from tapping government support measures including Vnesheconombank (Foreign economy bank) loans and state guarantees.

Other efforts being made to ensure favourable business environment includes modernising legislation in order to expand banks' lending to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and individual entrepreneurs, increasing the availability of financial resources, as well as state guarantees for small and medium-sized enterprises, including through the use of SWF.

The country also launched a new mechanism of defending entrepreneurs' rights as well as the Institute of Entrepreneurs' Rights Commissioner for the President of the Russian Federation (business ombudsman) in 2012. Another important part of improving the overall business climate is implementing the "road maps" of the national entrepreneurs' initiative which include around 620 events in total.

Modernising the national economy by means of introducing brand-new medical, energy and information technologies, developing space and telecommunications systems, enhancing energy efficiency remains a priority. In 2012, the Council for Economic Modernisation and Innovative Development under the President of the Russian Federation was also created to elaborate measures of government support in this sphere.

RSBF NEEDS TO GO GLOBAL TO THE NEXT LEVEL: MICHAEL TAY

Credited for helping the growth of business relationships between Singapore and Russia, founder of the Russia-Singapore Business Forum (RSBF) and former Singapore Ambassador to Moscow, Michael Tay, speaks exclusively to Opportunity Russia on the path ahead for RSBF and how the current geopolitical situation in Russia affects its relationship with the island city-state

As the founder of RSBF, how do you see the forum growing in the future? Will you be organising it this year?

Mr Tay: It's been eight years since the first Russia-Singapore Business Forum (RSBF) was organised. I think the forum now needs to reinvent itself and we need to do it differently from now on. Initially, the primary aim of the forum was to kick start business opportunities between Russia and Singapore. But today, with exponential business growth in the past few years between both countries, the RSBF needs to expand its horizon and become global. We are looking to restructure it and have initiated talks with the government.

We also want to tie up with the Russia-Singapore Inter-Governmental Commission which is a high level body. Another reason we are looking to make RSBF more global is because Russia is increasingly looking to venture into the Asian market through Singapore. While Singaporean companies are going to Russia and increasing their market, the real success story is that companies from Russia, Uzbekistan, etc are entering Singapore to set up their operations across Asia. This changing scenario calls for a transformation in the RSBF. We will now need to reevaluate and look at organising a Russian business forum yearly or once in two years.

RSBF has gained considerable popularity and stature over the last few years. Will the restructuring result in change in the brand?

Mr Tay: When we take RSBF global, we will need to retain its non-political, non-geographical identity. The forum will be more focused on innovation and less on borders. Once this happens, the forum will move beyond just Russia and Singapore. The forum will look at emerging markets and establish connections and networks across Asia and other parts of the globe for business opportunities.

What sets RSBF apart from other business forums such as Singapore Latin Asia Business Forum, Africa Singapore Business Forum etc?

Mr. Tay: When I founded RSBF, it was a very niche sector and it involved a coming together of B2B viz business men and private players of Singapore and Russia. Only after it gained ground and traction, did the G2G (government) involvement start. However, other forums such as Latin America and Africa needs active government commitment due to the distance involved geographically between the two regions. In our first RSBF, we were successful in bringing the then Russian Minister for Economic Development and Trade, Herman Gref, as he strongly believed in Singapore's model of

development. As Russia was looking to set up Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and attracting foreign investment, we successfully managed to bring him and ministers from Singapore together. But RSBF has a B2B identity and primarily aims to bring businessmen and entrepreneurs together and form successful networks between the two countries.

With the current geopolitical situation around Russia and Ukraine, what would your advice be to Singaporean business continuing trade with Russia? Do you foresee any difficulty in Singapore companies doing business with Russia and Ukraine?

Mr Tay: I don't foresee any difficulty in doing business with Russia and Ukraine as business transcends politics. It has no geography and should not be affected. The best example is of Singapore and Malaysia, despite all the problems and history behind us, business between the two countries are flourishing and did not get affected in any way. Singapore business should remain bullish on the Russian market as Russia is a big country with a growing economy.

In light of the current events happening in Russia, should Singapore business look towards investing in Russia?

Mr Tay: I see no reason for a pause in the business relation between the two countries. Russian consumer market is very big and has great purchasing power. The consumer market in Russia is very different compared to others. For instance, in China, you cannot be seen to be too rich and indulge in luxury brands and eat out at high-end restaurants. Unrestrained consumerism is frowned upon. But in Russia, there is no taboo about being too rich. In fact, Russians aspire to be rich and indulge in buying luxury items and looking good. For Singapore businesses looking to invest in the consumer market and high-end products, they should not wait.

What are your views on the oil politics that exists between Ukraine and Russia?

Mr Tay: Between Ukraine and Russia, there has always been oil politics. However, I feel both countries will come to an agreement with each other soon and that is the looming reality. In the long term, they cannot live without each other. It is a difficult situation for Ukraine as it is facing lot of pressure from Western Europe and United States and Russia felt that it was wrong for Europe to interfere, so it raised the stakes. It is a very intricate geopolitical situation and needs to be handled carefully.

In your opinion, what kind of position is Russia in now, in terms of global support?

Mr Tay: There will be a period of difficulty for Russia because of the sanctions against the country by Western Europe and United States. Businessmen in Russia will definitely be affected because of it as they will face stricter scrutiny. Furthermore, businesses and citizens are awaiting an assurance from President Putin that this is not an exercise to take over companies and will not translate to economic nationalisation. I personally do not see any sign of this, therefore businesses should not be worried.

With the situation at hand, what are the possibilities of Singapore furthering its relations with Russia?

Mr Tay: Russia has been looking east for quite some time as it can achieve the next level of growth only by entering the growing Asian market. Similarly Russia is a huge market with 150 million people and

has the highest number of billionaires. Many regions in Russia is developing at a fast pace and in this situation, Singapore has a lot to offer Russia. We have certain competitive advantages such as expertise in construction, infrastructure and development models. We are also a major trading hub in Asia. Singaporean master planners and architectural consultancy firms are in huge demand in Russia. There have been many success stories between the two countries where joint ventures have been mutually beneficial such as Changi Airport Group and its collaboration with Russia, Food Empire expansion in Asia through Singapore, etc. I foresee growing business relations with Russia in the long run and several more successful partnerships.

You are the chairman of the organising council of RSBF as well as been an Ambassador of Singapore to Moscow. What led to your interest in Russia and what are you currently working on to promote Singapore Russian relations?

Mr Tay: I loved Russian art and culture since the time I was a young child. Russian literature and great works by Russian authors created a thirst to know more about this enigmatic country. When I was offered a post in Russia, I took it as an opportunity to go and better understand Russian society.

One of the critical projects I undertook has been a turning point for me. It was when I commissioned a local Russian composer Vladimir Martynov to write a symphony on Singapore. Being passionate about Russian music and with an intention to increase awareness about Singapore in Russia, I was trying to raise funds for the project. I received overwhelming support from the Russian business community as they saw me promoting Russian art and music. The Russian media also supported me in this and the response led to a closer relationship between Singapore and Russia as both countries got to know each other during the consecutive RSBF.

Currently, I am looking to further promote Russian investors to connect with Singapore and vice versa. The quantum of investment between the two countries is the yardstick to measure the

success of RSBF. Now it is time to take it beyond Singapore and Russian borders and go global.

What sets Russian consumers and businesses apart from other regions?

Mr Tay: Many find Russia to be an enigma and a puzzle because they have such a mixed history. While they have similar orientation as a European-Western world, a huge portion of the country is in Asia and shares a history with China and Mongolia. It is a huge country with a long history and is still in the process of carving its own identity. In that regard, Singapore should be able to associate with it as we have been in existence only for the past 50 years and are searching for our identity.

On a personal note, please tell our readers about your current projects in Singapore and what drives you to success?

Mr Tay: As the founder of Singapore International Jazz Festival, I wanted to inject creativity in Singapore as I feel that the essence of Jazz is that every beat is original. This is the kind of creativity we need.

I also have an interest in Immigrants Gastrobar where we preserve our roots and culture by promoting Singapore heritage dishes. As a loyal Singaporean, I feel we have great potential and future but I think it is equally important we remember our past.



THE SMILE BEHIND BEAUTIFUL & HEALTHY TEETH

Singapore has an enviable reputation as a medical hub and its dental health facilities are a top attraction here

Dr William Chong from Pacific Healthcare Holdings has been practising dentistry since 1985 and his main area of expertise lies in cosmetic dentistry and dental implants. Dr Chong who co-founded Pacific Healthcare, a leading provider of specialist medical and dental care in Singapore, was interviewed on medical tourism as the majority of his patients are from Russia and Russian speaking countries.

Cosmetic Dentistry

“Singapore is a popular destination for medical tourism as we have a reputation for high quality, safe and reliable healthcare. The demand for cosmetic dentistry in particular has risen manifold in recent years due to increased awareness and the emphasis on one’s appearance in social and mass media.”

He added that cosmetic dentistry procedures are popular in his clinic as Pacific Healthcare Dental Clinics have the ability to produce cosmetic crowns within a day. “For a beautiful smile, in addition to colour, we need to look at the shape, size and alignment of teeth, and how they affect the lip and jaw position. The contours of the gums and its symmetry is important as well.”

In choosing dental practitioners, patients naturally want the latest in cutting edge technology as well as a quick and painless solution. Dr Chong gave the example of a patient from Russia who needed 28 crowns. Using computer aided design and manufacturing equipment (CAD-CAM), all the crowns for the front teeth were completed on the same day while the patient was under sedation and the care of the anesthetist. The patient returned the next day to complete the treatment for the rest of the teeth at the back of the mouth as she wanted the perfect smile and her treatment was in her own words “painless”.

Dental Implants

Dr Chong also discussed the other main aspect of his practice, which is implant dentistry. Implants are the solution for patients who have lost their teeth and can be done even in patients who have missing teeth for many years. They look and feel more natural than dentures or a bridge, which are more conventional forms of teeth replacement.

“My interest in Implant Dentistry started in the late 1980’s and I placed my first implant in early 1991 on my mother. Implants can improve a person’s quality of life and I am glad to have been able to help more than a thousand patients over the years. Implants improve eating ability and can be placed very safely and almost painlessly using minimal invasive techniques,” says Dr Chong.

“From a professional point of view, my research in basic bone biology has stood me in good stead and has allowed me to obtain consistent success for my patients especially in bone of poor quality in the upper jaw. Techniques have evolved over time. I placed my first “same day teeth implants” in 1999. More than 10 years have passed and I can confidently say with experience that when the bone is sound, controlled loading can be done immediately though it still takes 3 months for the bone to finally set firmly around all implants.” For consultation enquiries: Tel: (65) 9821 1006. E-mail: enquiry@drwilliamchong.com

Profile

Dr William Chong graduated from the National University of Singapore in 1985 with distinctions in Medicine, Oral Surgery and Operative Dentistry. He was accorded both the SDA and the MDA Silver Medals, honours reserved for the top student in the fields of Medicine and Oral Surgery respectively. He was further awarded the Faculty of Dentistry (Dental Society) Silver Jubilee Award and the University Bronze Medal for achieving overall 2nd in the NUS Final Professional Examination. He qualified for Fellowship in Dental Surgery from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in Sydney in 1998 and obtained a Masters of Science in Dentistry, from the National University of Singapore in 1999. His research was on Bone Regeneration around Dental Implants. He was awarded Fellowship & Diplomate of the International Congress of Oral Implantologists in 1996 and has lectured internationally. He is an honorary member of the Australian Society of Implant Dentists and was the Course Director & Examiner from 1999-2001, 2005-2007 and in 2012.





RUSSIA-SINGAPORE BUSINESS FORUM 2013

Bilateral economic ties are anticipated to increase further and relations are becoming much broader and deeper in scope

More than 500 delegates attended the eighth edition of the Russia-Singapore Business Forum (RSBF) on the theme of 'Connecting Markets, Linking Businesses.' That was exactly what happened throughout the three-day forum that started from 24 September 2013 at the Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre, where top political and business elites from Asia and Russia-CIS met.

In his welcome address, Mr Tony Chew, the Chairman of Singapore Business Federation (SBF) welcomed participants who included Guests of Honour, Mr Rustam Minnikhanov, the President of Tatarstan, Russia and Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance who spoke at the forum.

Other dignitaries and top businessmen who spoke included Sir Suma Chakrabarti, President, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Hanspeter Brunner, CEO of BSI Asia and Thomas Zilliacus, Chairman and CEO of Yuzoo Corporation. Singapore Senior Minister of State, Mr Lee Yi Shyan also attended the event.

Robust Growth across Sectors

Mr Chew reflected on the warm bilateral relationship and "robust economic linkages" between Russia and Singapore and he said, "Since 2007, bilateral trade has more than tripled in total value and this robust growth in trade has been borne across several product categories such as oil, metals, electronics, vehicles and ships, including the trade opportunities between our two countries."

One major milestone in this relationship, he said, was in June last year when, "SBF and IE Singapore co-organised the Singapore Urban Solutions Business Mission to Russia. The Singapore delegation comprised nine companies and 18 business delegates, visiting the cities of Moscow, St Petersburg and Kazan. This visit coincided with the fourth round of the Russia-Singapore Inter-

Governmental Commission (IGC), co-chaired by DPM Tharman and Mr Igor Shuvalov, First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia." Mr Chew was happy to report that the business mission has resulted in several million dollars' worth of bilateral business deals.

He also highlighted other noteworthy events that have marked developments in Russia-Singapore ties. They included:

- In August 2013, Russian pharmaceutical company, Pharm Standard, announced plans to buy Bever Pharmaceuticals, a Singapore-based company for

US\$590 million

- In June 2013, Changi Airport International (CAI) formed strategic partnerships with Far East and Bai-kal Region Development Fund, Pri-morsk Region Administration and the State Corporation Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs (VEB). CAI will be actively involved in route development, operations and maintenance, master planning and management training
- In April 2013, Russia's RusSing Med Holdings bought a 10 per cent stake in Singapore-based Asian American Medical Group

The above "bumper" deals followed closely behind the joint-venture between Changi Airport Group, Basic Element and Sber-bank as well as the partnership agreement between Olam International and RUSMOLCO last year.

Mr Tony Chew

Chairman Singapore Business Federation

Russia-Singapore Business Snapshots

- + Russia was Singapore's 24th largest trading partner in 2012
- + Bilateral trade increased by 30 per cent year-on-year to about US\$4.8 billion (mainly due to growth in fuel imports and concurrent increase in Singapore exports to Russia including electrical machinery, vehicles and plastics)
- + According to Singapore's Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority, there are 330 Russian companies registered in Singapore
- + Estimated Russian speaking expatriate community in Singapore stands at 5,000
- + The European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is the single largest foreign investor in Russia (outside the oil and gas sectors) 23 billion Euros

Scope for Further Growth

Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade next gave the keynote speech, where he shared his views on bilateral relations and economic cooperation between Russia and Singapore. He noted that there were currently more than 400 Russian companies in Singapore, up from just over 100 five years ago.

The first main point he wanted to emphasise was that there is further scope for growth. He said, "Despite recent volatility and challenges, the emerging market economies will remain the main contributor to global economic growth over the next five to 10 years, and likely beyond."

He also highlighted "significant opportunities" exists in Russian market of more than 140 million people who are increasingly affluent and offers business potential in areas like urban solutions and lifestyle products. The Russian government, he noted, is also actively reaching out to foreign investors to support efforts to diversify the economy and develop new sectors of growth."

Engaging Russia at Regional Level

The second major point of his address dealt with another fact that is "not as well known". Mr Tharman said, "Our overall relations with Russia have become broader and deeper in scope." He pointed how Singapore companies are now active in a "wider array of business sectors in Russia." These include urban development such as master planning, township development, transport and infrastructure as well as agribusiness, IT and education."

He also said, "We are engaging Russia at the regional level. Many of those projects go well beyond the federal cities of Moscow and St Petersburg and are located in some of Russia's fast growing and dynamic regions such as Pskov, Krasnodar, Tatarstan and Tomsk and also in the Russian Far East such as Primorsky."

This was also reflected in the delegations that came to the forum from regions such as Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Sverdlovsk. Mr Tharman encouraged Singapore companies at the forum to find out more; Tatarstan is one of Russia's most developed regions; Bashkortostan is Russia's largest



(Previous page, from left:) HE Russian Ambassador in Singapore, Mr Leonid P Moiseev; Mr Dmitry Barkov, GM of Sport & Fashion Management Pte Ltd; Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Singapore Senior Minister of State; Mr Freddy Boey, Provost NTU and Mr Michael Tay, Chairman Organising Committee of the RSBF. They earlier witnessed the signing of the agreement between NTU and Sport & Fashion Management. (Above:) Guest of Honour, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade

republic by population and well known for its energy reserves; Sverdlovsk is famous for metals and minerals and its capital Ekaterinburg is the fourth largest in the Federation.

Cooperation in Arts, Culture and Tourism

Mr Tharman also looks forward to another new area with great potential for bilateral cooperation – the arts, culture and tourism. The Russian Bolshoi Ballet performances in Singapore last year were sold-out months in advance; Russian art galleries specialising in works of Russian artists have been opened in Singapore in the last two years and there are also plans to open a Russian Cultural Centre in Singapore.

People-to-people ties are also improving and he cited statistics that showed a record number of Russian visitors to Singapore in 2012, about 70,000 compared to only 12,000 in 2003.

Following Mr Tharman's presentation, Mr Michael Tay, the Executive Director of the RSBF Organising Council and former Singapore Ambassador to Russia spoke to Opportunity Russia and said there is definitely more that can be done in this area as one of the best ways to understand Russia is through culture and he advocates for greater cultural exchanges. One landmark event was last November's Russia-Singapore Jazz Symphonia, with some of Singapore's best musicians joining the crème de la crème of Russian jazz greats.

Educational tie-ups

Mr Tharman's address also highlighted that there is also many educational linkages between Singapore universities and research institutions in Russia which is well known for their strength in Mathematics, Engineering and the Sciences. In fact, Russia's largest sports retailer, Sportmaster Group, which has established its first Asian headquarters in Singapore, signed a partnership agreement with Singapore's Institute for Sports Research (ISR) to establish the first Sportmaster Group Innovation Centre at the Forum. The Centre will be sited at the ISR at Nanyang Technological University.

RUSSIA LOOKING EAST FOR MORE OPPORTUNITIES & INVESTMENTS

Russia-ASEAN Business Council organises Mission to Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.



Signing of MoU for investment project in the Tver Region: Mr Kachushkin Sergey Valerievich, Deputy Head of Tver Region and Mr Ching Chiat Kwong, Executive Chairman & CEO of the Oxley Holdings



Mr Eugene Popov, Director of Asia Department of the Russian Ministry of Economic Development

Singapore was the last stop for the Russia-ASEAN Business Council mission on 28 March 2014 with a delegation of 31 companies who came to present as well as listen. The first part of the programme was briefings by representatives from Singapore government agencies which talked about the island's economy and attracting foreign businesses and investors.

The mission was organised within the framework of the agreements between Russian Federation and ASEAN by the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation and the Russia-ASEAN Business Council.

The morning Russia-Singapore 'Round Table' session was opened by Mr Eugene Popov, Director of Asia Department of the Russian Ministry of Economic Development. He said one of the mission's objectives was to build a roadmap that will pave the way for greater cooperation between Singapore and Russian businesses. One of the most important milestones in this roadmap was the high level Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) that is co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Ministers of both countries and was setup in 2010 to facilitate trade and investment by law. The last round of the Commission was held last June at St Petersburg where a series of agreements were initiated.

Mr Popov was followed by Mr Alexey Repik, who is co-chairman of Russia's leading business association authority, 'Business Russia,' and he is also Chairman of the Board of the country's largest pharmaceutical company, R-Pharm. He said most

members of the mission know Singapore's role "very well" and paid tribute to the island state, "Singapore is not just number one in terms of ease of doing business, but is also a great hub for attracting many prominent entrepreneurs from all over the world. There are already many Russian entrepreneurs and companies who are expanding in Asia through interfacing with Singapore businesses."



Mr Alexey Repik, Co-Chairman of Business Russia and Chairman of R-Pharm



Ms Anne Ho, Divisional Director for the Europe Group, IE Singapore

What he wanted to stress was that, "Now, they (Singapore companies) should be looking in the other direction – investing in the Russian economy. Overall, there have been significant improvements in the business and investment climate in the Russian Federation." He said that Singapore businesses can follow the example of many other companies who have entered Russia and they will find that, "Doing business in Russia is efficient, profitable and safe."

Bilateral Trade Snapshot

Bilateral Trade	S\$7.14 Billion (205 Billion RUB) 17 per cent increase year-on-year
Trading Partner Ranking	Singapore' 24th largest trading partner
Main Imports	Crude oil, nickel and copper
Main Exports	Electrical circuits, boring and sinking machinery, smart cards and helicopters
Singapore Companies in Russia	Mainly master-planning, consultancy services, transport and food sectors
Russian Companies in Singapore	Mainly wholesale & retail, professional and financial and insurance sectors
Bilateral Agreements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MOU on Economic Cooperation in Special Economic Zones 2. MOU on Nanotechnology Cooperation 3. MOU on Energy Cooperation 4. Investment Promotion & Protection Agreement 5. Double Taxation Agreement
Bilateral Platforms	High-level Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) Russia-Singapore Business Forum

Source: Data Insight (2012)



Ms Natalia Strigunova, Deputy Director, Asia Department Russian Ministry of Economic Development



Mr Victor Tarusin, Executive Director of the Russian ASEAN Business Council



Ms Valerie Chan, Senior Officer, Europe Desk, Economic Development Board



Ms Lee Li Jen, Manager, Europe HQ Desk, IE Singapore

From the Singapore government, presentations were made by Ms Serena Liao, Senior Assistant Director for Emerging Markets (Latin America, Russia & Central Asia) from the Ministry of Trade and Industry; who described the functions of her ministry and relevant highlights of Singapore's economic profile. She said that while Singapore has a small economy, it is an open one.

Ms Anne Ho, Divisional Director for the Europe Group in IE Singapore, which is in charge of driving Singapore's external economy, highlighted, "Singapore welcomes foreign companies such as yourself, to work together with us, for mutual gains and leverage on our platforms." She said total trade last year stood at S\$7.14 billion, making Russia, Singapore's 24th biggest trading partner. She hoped both countries can build on this with greater growth this year. Ms Ho remarked, "It was helpful that both governments already have agreements in place that avoids double taxation (effective 2010)."

She also presented a snapshot of the sectors Singapore companies are involved in Russia; they range from lifestyle, agriculture, logistics-transport, electronics and information technology. They include leading Singapore companies like Olam which has invested in Rusmolco in the Penza region to tap into the large demand for dairy and grain-based products; Olam has also acquired a port elevation facility in Azov; Jurong Consultants have completed several projects in Russia including the Puschino Biotechnological Park in Moscow, just to name a few and now working with stok to provide advisory and management services to Moglino Special Economic Zones.

Two years ago, Changi Airport International completed the injection of funds into airport projects in South Russia and is now working with their partners to manage and further develop the airports in the Krasnodar region. They have also signed MOUs to look into developing an airport in Vladivostok in the Far East of Russia.

Ms Valerie Chan, the Senior Officer in Singapore's Economic Development Board (EDB) Europe Desk came on next to speak on how Russian companies can work with the EDB to tap into Asian markets through Singapore. EDB has identified some "industry verticals" where Singapore can play a more strategic role. Ms Chan said some of these verticals that EDB is focusing on can be divided into three main areas.

- **Manufacturing:** The growing electronics sector, transport engineering, chemicals, precision engineering as well as biomedical sciences
- **Services:** Logistics, consumer businesses, professional services, infocomm and media as well as healthcare
- **Emerging areas:** Environmental technologies, visual and performing arts, space technology as well as safety and security

The EDB also sees Singapore as an ideal launch pad for expansion into Asia. In the last two years, the EDB has seen a marked rise in interest from international companies (such as VISA, P&G, Philips, Unilever) wanting to tap into the growth of Asia's consumer markets.



Ms Zlata Sheve, LL.M (Germany), Advocate (Russia), PhD, Registered Foreign Lawyer (S'pore), Tummel Schutze and Partners LLP



Mr Dmitry Barkopv, CEO Sports & Fashion Management Pte Ltd



Mr Maxim Dyakov, CEO of Morton



Mr Igor Kucheriavy, President, Tronic International Pte Ltd

EDB creates a business-friendly “home” in Asian environment for companies to base their operations here. The support extends to innovation in R&D technology and business practices and models as well as funding; human resource development, training, education and supply of skilled and professional personnel.

The collective message of the Singapore agencies is to ask members of the mission to keep Singapore in mind, whether it is tapping into the growing opportunities in the republic and Asia or as a possible partner for some of the ideas they might have for further developing their businesses in Russia.

Other Singapore agencies that made presentations included Ms Emeline Lam, Director of the Singapore Manufacturers Federation's Global Business Division and Mr Tong Shu Lan, Director of Business & Service Excellence and International Partnership Office of SPRING Singapore. SPRING is the national standards and accreditation body and is responsible for helping Singapore enterprises build trust in Singapore products and services.

Tver Region - Oxley Holdings MOU

One of the highlights of the day was the official signing of the MOU between the Tver Regional Government and Oxley Holdings Limited for an investment project involving the progressive development of the construction market of residential, commercial and industrial estate in the Tver region which is aimed at improving the living standards of the

citizens there. At the signing, the Regional Government of Tver was represented by Deputy Head, Mr Sergey Kachushkin; and Oxley Holdings was represented by its Executive Chairman, Mr Ching Chiat Kwong. The scope of the project as outlined in the MOU will include the introduction of new technologies in the construction, design and management of the region. The development project aims to help establish Tver as a region favourable for investment and business activities.

Russian Speakers

The second session was largely devoted to presentations by Russian companies on the various sectors of the Russian economy and industry as well as a talk on the Russian Direct Investment Fund (see article on page 22).

The Russian speakers included:

- Mr Illia Dimitrov, the CEO of the Association of Electronic Trading Platforms (AETP)
- Ms Natalia Strigunova, the Deputy Director (Asia Department) of the Russian Ministry of Economic Development who spoke on 'The Investments and Business Environment in Russia'
- Mr Sergey Kachushkin, the Vice-Governor of the Tver Region who spoke on developments there
- Mr Victor Lysechko, the Head of the International Department of the Russian Direct Investment Fund
- Mr Victor Tarusin, the Executive Director of the Russia-ASEAN Business Council and Mr Maxim Dyakov, the CEO of Morton



Best wishes for RUSSIA on NATIONAL DAY!



50 teachers were selected to undergo the Intensive Master Teachers Programme. These Master Teachers, together with Educare's facilitators, trained 300 teachers in a three-week teacher training programme.



Singapore's DPM Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Tatarstan President, Rustam Minnikhanov witnessed the signing of a Master Service Agreement between Educare's CEO and the Minister of MoES, Fattakhov Engel to deliver training and educational consultancy services in Tatarstan.

The Tatarstan's Institute of Education Development (IED) engaged Educare to conduct learning needs analysis, training, coaching and mentoring on pedagogical strategies for 240 teachers.



Educare was invited to present on "21st Century Learning in Singapore" at the All Russia Teacher's Festival in Elabuga, Tatarstan. A MoU between Educare and Tatarstan's Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) was signed to explore areas for collaboration: Professional Development for In-Service Teachers and School Leaders, ICT for Teaching and Learning.



CELEBRATING the transformation of Teaching and Learning, Educare generates **real impact** and **shapes destinies** by progressively building capacities of educators to equipping our children with 21st century skills and competencies.

Educare has embarked on a three-year Enhancing Teaching Quality project to support their holistic educational improvement efforts in Tatarstan. Training will also be provided for senior education officials, school leaders, directors and more than 33,000 teachers to effect change at all levels.

Educare was invited by the Regional Centre for Informatisation and Evaluation of Quality of Education to conduct a five-day programme in Izhevsk, Udmurtia. The programme benefiting 140 teachers and school leaders focused on 21st century skills and competencies.



Educare's CEO gave a presentation on the programmes and efforts in Tatarstan to First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Igor Shuvalov and the President of Tatarstan, Rustam Minnikhanov.

MOVING FORWARD

Armed with meaningful experiences and success stories, Educare is ready to scale new heights and embark on enriching journeys with you.

SPIEF 2014

SUSTAINING THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY



Key issues discussed at St Petersburg covers global growth prospects in a new emerging environment, reviving the growth engines for major emerging markets and the development of new technologies and their influence on the global economy

This year's St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) held between 22-24 May 2014 saw participation by 5,000 political and business leaders, leading scientists, public figures, and members of the media from all over the world.

The Forum was chaired by the Minister for Economic Development of the Russian Federation, with input on the programme and activities coming from a community of major international and Russian business leaders. The theme for 2014 was 'Sustaining Confidence in a World Under Transformation.' The programme was organised under three main topics:

- Spurring Growth while Mitigating Risks
- Realising Russia's Competitive Edge
- Managing Disruptions and Embracing Change

With an objective to gather the world's leading decision makers to identify and deliberate the key challenges facing emerging markets and growth economies, Russia and the world, SPIEF sought to engage communities to find common purpose and establish frameworks to forge solutions.

Spurring Growth, Mitigating Risks

Sessions that fall under 'Spurring Growth While Mitigating Risks', featured various panel discussions, debates, workshops and speeches by key leaders in various fields.

Discussions on major economic powers facing significant restructuring issues as well as impact this might have on prospective investors and business strategists were also included. Participants in panel discussions and briefings will also scrutinised and analysed the state of the global economy and determined the main risks, opportunities and challenges that needed to be resolved.

The key issues on the programme included: global growth

prospects in a new emerging environment, reviving the growth engines for major emerging markets and the development of new technologies and their influence on the global economy.

Various workshops in partnership with private players and institutions were also held for the benefit of economic and business leaders. The programme included a plenary session where a distinguished panel will discussed the measures to boost confidence in the global economy and explore fresh ideas to resolve key concerns.

Realising Russia's Competitive Edge

The Sessions on Russia focussed on discussing and unlocking Russia's competitive potential, as well as ensuring sustainable economic growth in both the short and long terms. These sessions featured a number of presentations from key figures in the Russian government. Panel discussions included topics on nurturing growth clusters in Russian regions, unleashing Russia's talent pool to develop its competitive standing and building long term investor partnership for Russia's infrastructure agenda.

While investors found plenty of opportunity to explore various areas for business, the programme also encouraged Russian leaders and private sector players to help with solutions to various problems faced by Russia. One such session organised under the topic, 'Realising Russia's Competitive Edge' enlisted steps needed to bring Russia's stalled economy to a new phase of sustained growth. The session was held in cooperation with Gazprombank.

A television debate on Russian firms building global profit was also held at the SPIEF 2014. Viewers were educated on the topic of growing Russian business presence in South-east Asia, Africa and Central Asia. It will also include a feature on various methods followed by Russians firms to compete globally and how these can be encouraged.



ЭСТЕТИЧЕСКАЯ СТОМАТОЛОГИЯ

Улыбка – это то, как мы выражаем свои эмоции, и то, как другие люди видят нас. Когда она идеальна, мы производим на окружающих замечательное впечатление.

Мало кто задумывается, что форма и пропорции лица зависят от расположения наших зубов, которые являются опорой для губ и щек. В дополнение, правильное выравнивание, размер и цвет наших зубов обеспечат симметрию и баланс, которые являются сущностью лицевой эстетики. Используя новейшие компьютерные технологии, мы можем производить специально созданные фарфоровые пломбы, виниры и коронки в течение нескольких часов при активной лабораторной поддержке наших собственных техников. Это дает возможность нашим пациентам преображаться всего за несколько дней.

ЗУБНЫЕ ИМПЛАНТЫ – “ВСЕГО ЗА ОДИН ДЕНЬ”

Если вы потеряли зуб или несколько, импланты могут исправить ситуацию и подарить вам новую жизнь и уверенность. Они выглядят, ощущаются и функционируют как нормальные зубы. Всего за один день импланты могут быть установлены на место отсутствующих передних зубов. Вы сможете возобновить привычный образ жизни незамедлительно.

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BECKONING GLOBAL INVESTORS TO RUSSIA: RDIF SHOWS THE WAY

Acting as catalyst for FDI in Russia, RDIF is uniquely positioned to benefit co-investors and partners

With the Russian economy projected to grow from \$2.5 trillion to \$3.2 trillion in 2017, all eyes are on Russia as it has emerged as a shining beacon of light for global investors who are on the lookout for robust economic growth. According to the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2013-2014, released by the World Bank, Russian economy stands third in FDI inflow after USA and China globally.

In an effort to encourage investors, President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, together set up Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) in 2011 to co-invest alongside top global investors, acting as a catalyst for direct investment in Russia. A 100 per cent subsidiary of Vnesheconombank (VEB), Russia's state development bank, RDIF since its inception, has invested \$3.8 billion into leading Russian companies, of which over \$900 million were invested

by RDIF and more than \$2.8 billion came from international co-investors.

RDIF: Encouraging equity investments in Russia

"Today the positive dynamics of the Russian economy, the accumulated safety factors and our reserves allow us to set new ambitious goals. RDIF is now up and running and practically all centers of global capital – the Middle East, China, Europe, the United States and Australia – are working with the Fund," said President Vladimir Putin.

RDIF also attracted over \$10 billion of foreign capital into the Russian economy through long-term strategic partnerships. RDIF was established by the Russian government to make equity investments principally in the Russian economy. At the G20 Summit in St Petersburg in September, the recommendations of the group were presented to Russian President and other leaders of G20 countries.

As part of the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, each year RDIF organises a panel discussion dedicated to investment opportunities in Russia, as well as a traditional meeting between Russian President and the leaders of global investment community. Furthermore, the CEO of RDIF has been appointed to represent Russia at the BRICS Business Council launched to foster multilateral investment among BRICS countries of which Russia has the largest GDP per capita (PPP).

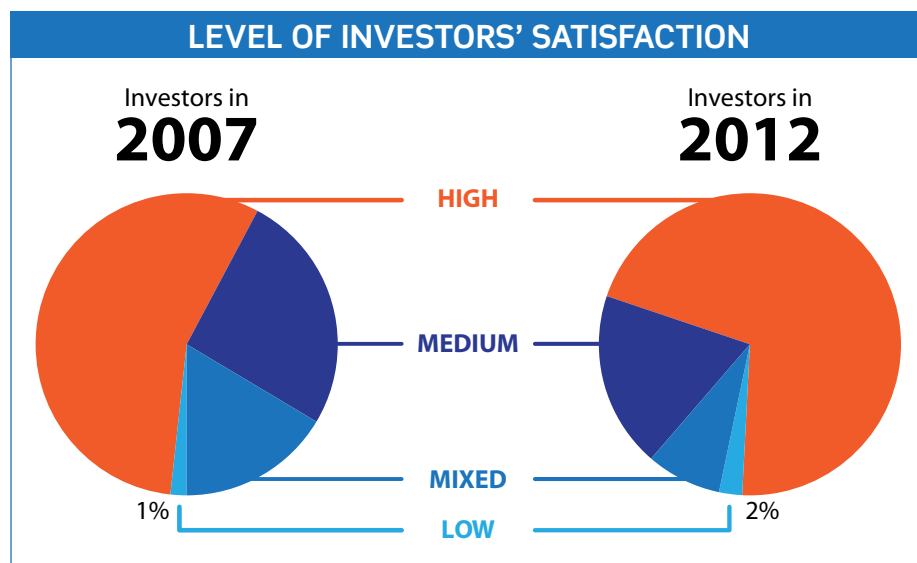
RDIF: Partnership and collaboration

While the investment fund has attracted global investors and strategic partners, RDIF primarily aims to become the catalyst for attracting FDI, talent and technologies into the Russian economy by carrying out profitable investments. Working towards the goal, the fund is focusing on Russia's growing middle class with increasing disposable income, investing in increasing Russian

manufacturers' efficiency etc. "Russia has developed and achieved some good results especially in light of the difficulties that global markets are experiencing. RDIF has already attracted strong interest from top global investors and its project pipeline is growing," said Dmitry Medvedev, Prime Minister of Russia while explaining the significance of RDIF. The fund along with co-investors will predominantly invest in Russia, however, up to 20 per cent of the fund can be deployed outside of Russia.

Investors such as Bader M. Al-Saad, Managing Director of Kuwait Investment Authority welcomed the novel initiative and said, "The idea of RDIF is unique. Many private equity funds are established every day but there is only one fund in the world where a country says: 'I am sending \$10 billion and welcome anyone who would like to partner with me on good terms' – this is the only fund we have seen on these terms."

- The fund is the anchor investor in the IPO of the Moscow Exchange and it proactively sourced leading international co-investors from the US and China. In addition, prior to the IPO, RDIF brought a number of co-investors to the Exchange including the China Investment Corporation (CIC), BlackRock, the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Cartesian Capital.
- Pulling of the largest ever investment in Russia from Middle Eastern investors, a consortium of RDIF, Macquarie Renaissance Infrastructure Fund (MRIF), AGC Equity Partners and Xenon Capital Partners acquired a blocking stake in Enel OGK-5, one of the leading power generating companies in Russia. This was the largest private equity deal in the energy sector.
- RDIF invested in Russian Forest Products, Russia's second largest timber industry company – the first investment of the Russia-China Investment Fund, the joint fund of RDIF and China Investment Corporation (CIC).
- RDIF and General Electric (GE) signed an agreement to jointly invest \$100 million in construction of distributed power co-generation systems (up to 25 MW) to meet the growing energy



Source: IMF, Central Bank of Russia, Ministry of Finance, Rosstat, Moscow Exchange

demand for the developing industrial infrastructure of the Russian regions

- RDIF and Baring Vostok Private Equity Fund V announced a joint investment Tigers Realm Coal Limited (TIG), an Australian listed company with coking coal assets in the Chukotka province in Russia's Far East.
- Leading the consortium of investors including EBRD and CapMan, one of the leading Nordic alternative asset managers, RDIF brought about investment of \$100 million in growth of MAYKOR, the leading player in the Russian IT servicing and outsourcing market.
- RDIF attracted leading foreign investors such as Templeton, East Capital, Union Investments, Capital International and Charlemagne into a consortium to invest in the IPO of ALROSA, a Russian diamond company. ALROSA is the world's largest diamond producer by output in carats.
- RDIF along with Deutsche Bank, one of the leading international banks, made a joint investment in one of Russia's largest telecommunications company, Rostelecom.
- RDIF and EBRD are setting up a joint investment in Cotton Way, Russia's leading commercial in laundry and textile management.

With the backing of the Russian Government, RDIF provides a unique partnership platform to access investment opportunities in Russia.

Some of the strategic partnership with global investors includes US\$5bn partnership with Abu Dhabi Department of Finance which focuses on investment in infrastructure in the Russian federation. A US\$2bn partnership with Mubadala Development Company, €1bn partnership with Fondo Strategico Italiano and many other such tie-ups are on the anvil.

Investing in Infrastructure Development

RDIF's current pipeline of infrastructure projects includes \$10bn investment opportunities across a broad range of sectors. Well positioned to be the first call for significant infrastructure projects considered by the government, RDIF and its parent company Vnesheconombank (VEB) is set to attract significant long-term project debt financing for prospective infrastructure projects at reasonable rates.

The investment fund is also currently leading discussions on investment structures where capital expenditures are partially financed by domestic pools of long-term capital, such as pension savings and National Welfare Fund (NWF) reserves. In 2013, the Russian Government approved the procedure for investing funds of the NWF (approx. US\$90bn) in the infrastructure projects. As a result, RDIF on an exclusive basis is eligible to invest funds of the NWF together with its co-investors in the infrastructure projects in Russia.

Roundtable panel answering questions (from left), moderator, Ms Emmeline Lam, Director of Global Business Group, SMF; Mr Sergey Pernikov, Deputy Governor of Pskov; Mr Dayanthi Thangavel, Jurong Consultants Pte Ltd and translator.



SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES IN RUSSIA'S SEZs

Singapore is involved in the latest Special Economic Zone (SEZ) launched in Russia's Pskov region. A special delegation came to present highlights of the Moglino SEZ

After its first Seminar on Russia (with the focus on the Pskov Region) held last November, the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) organised a second event, hosting a visiting group of 13 Russian Government officials headed by Mr Sokolov Andrey, the Director of the Department of Special Economic Zones, Region Development Projects and Single-Industry Cities.

More than 20 members of Singapore's business community interested in the Moglino SEZ in the Pskov Region attended the presentation which was given by Mr Sergey Pernikov, the Vice Governor of the Pskov region and Mr Dayanthi Thangavel, from Jurong Consultants Pte Ltd, the Master Plan consultants for the Moglino development for the last three years. The presentations ended with a Round Table Q&A session when Mr Pernikov and Mr Thangavel answered questions from participants. The event also allowed the delegation to get a

direct insight of the requirement of businesses interested in investing in Russian SEZs.

Ms Emmeline Lam, Director of Global Business Group, SMF welcomed the delegates and briefed them on Federation's work and capabilities in different divisions.

Highlights of Mr Pernikov's presentation included:

- The SEZ's strategic location near St Petersburg (300kms), Moscow (600kms) and near Estonia, Latvia and Belarus
- The region has developed a comprehensive customs infrastructure for goods transportation with 11 exits points via road, rail and air
- Pskov already has a competitive industrial infrastructure and the Region's economy dominated by small and medium sized enterprises
- High economic industrial sector potential where the GDP breakdown

is currently composed of: 20.5 per cent Manufacturing; 18.8 per cent Trade; 14.4 per cent Transport and Communication; 9.7 per cent State Management; 6.8 per cent Agriculture and 29.8 per cent Others.

- Priority Sectors for Economic Development: Agro-Industrial Complex; Transport & Logistics; Construction; Consumer Goods Industry; Timber Processing; Tourism and Electrical Equipment & Machinery.

Pskov Region Potential

Many European countries such as Germany, Finland and Denmark have already recognised the potential of the region and in the last four years, Pskov has managed to attract foreign investments for 77 projects totalling US\$1.2 billion; many of them in the transport, communication, agriculture, manufacturing and retail sectors said Mr Pernikov. Coming to the Moglino Industrial Production SEZ, according to Mr Pernikov, the implementation of the

SEZ Incentives for Investment

	Russian Federation	SEZ
Income Tax	Federal – 2% Regional – 18%	Federal – 2% Regional – 0% to 13% (0 is allowed in Tatarstan, Samara & Lipetsk)
Property Tax	2.2%	0% for 10 years
Transport Tax (in EUR/1 hp)	0.1 to 3.8	0 for 10 years
Land Tax	1.5%	0% for 5 years
Insurance Fee Payment	34%	4%
Free Customs Zone	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exempt from Import Duties & VAT by import of raw materials, equipment, construction materials and components No export duties & VAT for finished goods
Ready to Use Infrastructure	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free connection to utilities Favorable rent rates Buy out of land is allowed on favourable conditions
Insurance Fee Payment	34%	14%* <i>*Limited to residents of innovation SEZ, industrial SEZ involved in R&D activities and for residents of tourist cluster</i>

Unless there are any international laws that does not permit otherwise (e.g. double taxation rules) there are no barriers for full repatriation of capital and profits as well as 100 per cent foreign equity for the ownership of the company in Russia.

project together with Jurong Consultants ensures world standards of quality. Jurong Consultants was involved in the masterplanning of the 215-hectare Moglino SEZ. The masterplan includes the development of several strategic spheres: automotive components, electrical equipment; agricultural equipment, construction materials, communal, logistics and rail equipment.

He also listed other benefits for potential investors; they include: convenient location; infrastructure development at the expense of federal and regional budgets; tax privileges (see table accompanying); free customs zone regime; low costs of utilities and infrastructure connection; social infrastructure (nearby housing, training centre and Pskov city centre) and logistics cluster within the SEZ (near to rail and airport).

About 70 per cent of the SEZ will be completed by the end of this year and the first tenants are expected to move in by June. After the presentation, Mr Pernikov spoke to Opportunity Russia and shared how apart from the

briefing, he was also in Singapore to continue the collaboration between Pskov region and Singapore's Jurong Consultants and announced a further three year extension for the services of the company.

Apart from Singapore, the Russian delegation will also visit Korea, Japan and China to develop new economic ties with these countries. He said, "All the meetings are planned in connection with the development of the Moglino SEZ, we are looking for new contacts and partners, also to support our existing contacts as well as maybe future residents for Moglino."

During their visit here, the Russian delegation had the chance to meet potential residents for the SEZ. One of the targeted industries they hope to attract is precision engineering. He said, "We visited Amtek Precision Technology Pte Ltd which is the type of company we hope to attract to Moglino. In fact, they are already planning to visit us in June to see for themselves the SEZ."

The Vice-Governor also placed on record his appreciation for the work done

so far by Jurong Consultants, "We are very satisfied with our relationship with Jurong especially for their knowledge, experience and quality of the service."

All SEZs work within the same legal framework and enjoy the same incentives, what makes Moglino, the latest SEZ, different said Mr Pernikov, "First of all, we provide very good administrative support and stability as well as our location is excellent for logistics as it is near Moscow, St Petersburg and many other European cities."

The Vice-Governor's portfolio of responsibility includes the promotion and development of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Economy and Investment sectors of the Pskov Region. His advice for potential investors is that they should do their usual due diligence to carry out market research for their industry and choose a strategic location that will benefit their operations that has all the supporting infrastructure in and around the SEZ.

Mr Pernikov is no stranger to Singapore and has visited the island about 10 times for business in the last three years. He admires the efficiency of how things are done in Singapore and how there is a strong emphasis on achieving results with a high level of expertise. Most of all he said, "Although Singapore has no natural resources, I admire how Singapore is able to take every opportunity, no matter how small, and maximise the chances of success and achieve something great out of it. This requires the country to use its human resource abilities at 100 per cent, at full capacity."

The final message from the Vice-Governor to potential investors was, "Russia is one of the most interesting countries to visit for business as well as tourism. There is now a great change in the country towards achieving greater efficiency, better quality and support for businesses. Russia also has a great tradition of hospitality with the people being very friendly and its culture has contributed greatly to the world; so I believe it will be very interesting for both sides especially to establish a business in Russia. They should come and spend some time to enjoy the sights and culture of our country."



EURASIAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

The development of the regional economic integration is an objective process

In a globalising and increasingly competitive international environment there is a strong trend towards creating and strengthening of regional associations. Crisis developments in the global economic and financial system further push the countries to cooperation so that collectively they can respond more efficiently to economic challenges and obtain real competitive advantages.

The Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) will be created by 1 January 2015 in accordance with the decisions of the Presidents of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. This strategic goal involves the realisation of four economic freedoms – free movement of goods, services, capital and labour including systematic liquidation of remaining barriers in the framework of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space. In the next few years, there are plans to move towards a common EAEC policy in the key sectors of economy.

The draft EAEC Treaty is being actively elaborated. The Governments of the Troika-States with the participation of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) prepared and generally agreed upon the institutional part of the Treaty that defines the international legal status, organisational framework and mechanisms of operation of the Community that is being established. The parties continue working on the content of the sectoral part of the Treaty.

An important component of these activities is to prepare by 1 March 2014, the list of remaining exceptions and limitations in the framework of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space and to specify the measures and necessary timing for elimination of those exceptions and limitations.

The Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) will be created by 1 January 2015 in accordance with the decisions of the Presidents of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan

The deepening of integration in the framework of the Troika offers great opportunities for the business. The single market was created with 170 million of consumers and a unified legislation which functions on the basis of the WTO norms and

is harmonised in view of the macroeconomic policy, rules of competition, technical regulation system, transport, natural monopolies' tariffs, agricultural and industrial subsidies.

New integration formats already give specific practical benefits to the member States. Besides, the positive integration effect is noted in spite of a general slowdown in global economy and trade. Over a period of nine months in 2013, a consistent growth of gross domestic product in the member States of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space was registered - by 1.7 per cent as compared to the similar period in 2012.

Mutual turnover among the Troika-States excluding changes in the sphere of fuel and energy trade has grown by 0.7 per



(Previous page:) Past file photo of EAEC leaders meeting; the EAEC champions economic freedoms of goods, services, capital and labour

(Above left & right:) Alexander Lukashenko, President of Belarus with Russian Prime Minister, Mr Dmitry Medvedev and Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev, President Kazakhstan initiating EAEC from January 2015; market potential of 170 million consumers in future

cent. The positive trend is a progressive decline of the share of raw materials in the mutual trade – from 40 to 33 per cent during functioning of the Customs Union with simultaneous rise of indicators of trade in more technological goods.

Export indicators have slightly fallen due to reduction of mineral exports by all members of the Troika to third countries. At the same time, in 2013, import component of foreign trade in the member States of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space continued to grow – by 1.1 per cent. It is not so much foreign demand than the demand within the Customs Union itself that ensures orders to our enterprises in various industries, agriculture, and service sector.

Furthermore, the direct result of functioning of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space is the improvement of general investment climate in the member States: over a period of 11 months in 2013, investments in core capital increased in Belarus by 8.2 per cent, in Kazakhstan – by 8.7 per cent, in Russia it did not change considerably.

The number of unemployed registered with the labour offices as among the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space countries has reduced by 12.8 per cent over the last year and is estimated at 5 per cent. Salaries are consistently growing in all states of the Customs Union both in nominal and in real terms. The inflation rate slowed down over the first 11 months in 2013 and amounted to 6.9 per cent (compared to 7.4 per cent in 2012).

Efforts by new partners to join our format are a testimony of effectiveness of economic interaction within Eurasian integration structures.

In 2013, Armenia's accession process to the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space was launched and is being dynamically implemented; a specialised road map

was approved. It is noted that the Armenian side shows an interest and actively participates in this process, making it possible to complete the process of Armenia's accession to the contractual legal framework of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space as soon as possible.

Simultaneously, efforts are being taken to prepare the Kyrgyz Republic's accession to the Customs Union. The corresponding draft road map is almost ready and will be submitted for consideration to the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council at the level of the heads of state after it is finalised by experts.

It is essential that, while creating integration, international experiences, including the European one, are drawn upon, without opposing other states and associations. The EAEC strives for harmonious functioning of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space, based on norms and practices of the World Trade Organisation.

The EAEC actively collaborates with third states and other integration associations on the international stage. In addition to the on-going negotiations on creation of free-trade zones with New Zealand and the European Free Trade Association, the Customs Union actively negotiates with Vietnam.

A joint research group will be established in order to study the expediency of concluding similar agreement with Israel; and the creation of such group with India is currently being considered.

In total, the Eurasian Economic Commission has received around 40 applications from different states and integration associations on creation of free trade zones with the Customs Union. There is a noticeable increase in interest towards EAEC and the association is open to dialogue and cooperation on equitable and mutually beneficial basis.

RUSSIANS MAKING HISTORY IN SINGAPORE

Distinguished Russians who have made their home in the Island City are bringing world-wide accolades and recognition to their host country



Prof Dr Boris Luk'yanchuk receiving the President's Science Award from Singapore President Tony Tan

Throughout history, Russians have excelled and received accolades in many fields; from classical music to opera and ballet, literature to the arts, science and technology, right up to space exploration. Their names and achievements have gone down in history for their outstanding contributions to mankind. Today, the Russian diaspora across the world has also gained a reputation for excellence. Opportunity Russia, in this issue, highlights distinguished Russians in Singapore who are making waves in their fields of expertise and gaining prominence.

Prof Dr Boris Luk'yanchuk: Pioneer in Theoretical Physics

A graduate from Moscow State University and PhD from Landau Institute of Theoretical Physics, Dr Boris Luk'yanchuk has worked alongside renowned Nobel Laureates such as Prof Abrikosov and Prof Sheldon Lee Glashow. He has made astounding discoveries in laser-matter interactions, including new insights in laser thermochemistry, laser cleaning, laser ablation and plasmonics. A Senior Scientist at A*STAR's Data Storage Institute (DSI), he is also an Honorary Professor at Johannes Kepler University, Linz, Austria, since 1991. He

worked for twenty years at the General Physics Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow and was a visiting Professor at universities in Austria, Italy, France, Sweden and Japan.

Dr Luk'yanchuk credits his success in diverse sections of physics to his doctorate programme. "Landau school is famous for preparation of experts in theoretical physics able to work in a broad range of different areas. Although it is not easy to pass 10 examinations on theoretical physics, it helps to switch fast from one field of physics to another. I have been working successfully in many fields: theory of quantum liquids, superconductivity, gas dynamics, etc. For example, during ICMAT 2013, Prof Lee, Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry, gave reference to my paper on MALDI dynamics," explained the Professor.

Among his outstanding contributions in the field of science, Dr Luk'yanchuk has worked extensively on laser thermochemistry and has published several books on the subject. "In laser thermochemistry I have investigated nonlinear dynamics of chemically active media in the field of laser radiation and self organisation phenomena. Ilya Prigogin, the Nobel Prize winner, invited me with a lecture to the Solvay Seminar in Brussels. My lecture was published in this book. In Singapore I published the book with Cambridge International Science," he said.

Having been in Singapore for the past 15 years, the Professor has made the Island city his home. "As a scientific adviser at DSI, I was initially invited by a colleague in Singapore to help him with theoretical calculations. Being a scientist, it was easy to adjust to the country as Maxwell's equations are absolutely the same in any country. But

I am very impressed with Singapore and its efficiency. It provides one with the infrastructure to realise big projects effectively," said the professor when asked about his second home.

Dr Luk'yanchuk is also credited for developing the theory of laser ablation of polymers and was the Chair of the prestigious International Conference on Laser Ablation in 2009. He developed a theory of laser cleaning and published a monograph in World Scientific. Historically, it was the first book from A*STAR. "We developed novel ideas for laser cleaning and established a world record in cleaning efficiency. We got a few patents on different methods of laser cleaning," said Dr Luk'yanchuk.

In September 2013, Dr Luk'yanchuk was awarded Singapore's President's

Science Award for his outstanding contribution in laser matter interactions and light scattering by nanoparticles, in particular to Fano resonance in plasmonic materials by Singapore President Tony Tan.

According to Dr Luk'yanchuk, every research should increase the basic understanding and concept of scientific process. "We got a few patents and developed new software which is now under Exploit Technologies Pte Ltd for commercialisation. Probably the most important benefit from our papers is the certification of "a good name" for Singaporean Science by numerous scientific citations," he explained. "All we are trying to do is to convert some of our "crazy ideas" into new practical devices," said the award-winning professor.

“Being a scientist, it was easy to adjust to the country as Maxwell's equations are absolutely the same in any country. But I am very impressed with Singapore and its efficiency. It provides one with the infrastructure to realise big projects effectively”

Prof Dr Boris Luk'yanchuk



Tatiana Alieva: Giving Back Through Her Art

Tatiana Alieva has spent the past 22 years in Singapore and has been one of the most prolific artists whose works are collected across Southeast Asia and rest of the world by private and corporate art aficionados. Born in Baku, Azerbaijan, part of the former Soviet Union, the vivacious artist has established herself here and in Azerbaijan through her evocative paintings.

After graduating with a degree in Biology, she studied art in Moscow

where she lived for several years. She had studied painting alongside Russian artists now widely recognised for their artistic achievements while she was there. She and her family then moved to Wellington, New Zealand, where her artistic passion deepened further thanks to the spectacular city, ocean and mountainous landscapes. Marriage brought her to the shores of Thailand which gradually influenced her to paint images of a very different kind on her canvas. She then followed her husband Firoudin to Singapore, where she raised her two children who are now based in London and Geneva. According to Tatiana, her exposure to Asia and its unique vibrancy has inspired her to create richer paintings. "My art changed 100 per cent when I came to Asia. Here everything is expressed in brighter colours and stronger feelings and this has been reflected in my paintings."

Adding another dimension to her ebullient paintings, an Art Enrichment Programs at the La Salle SIA College of Arts now helped her fully focus on the colours and vibrancy of Asia. In Singapore, Tatiana has held regular exhibitions and has gained wide recognition. "I love living here as everything works perfectly. However, you must know a little English then you can survive here very well," she quips.

Her favourite Singaporean food - local fried rice and chilly crab makes her feel at home. Through her paintings, one can get a glimpse and depth of bright childlike joy as well as mature feminine grace. Reflecting the source of her inspiration and her world experience, her paintings comprise subjects as wide ranging as Singapore motor racing, brilliantly coloured butterflies to the wild animals of Africa.

Tatiana has also given back to her host country with her art. Every year, she has donated paintings that were auctioned and their proceeds went to charitable causes such as the Red Cross, Mercy Relief, Food from the Heart, National University of Singapore Society, Singapore Council of Women's Organisations, Bone Marrow Donor Programme, amongst others.

In answer to the question - is there anything she might like Singaporeans to know about Russia, "I wish more Singaporeans learn about Russian history. They will find out that Russia is country that has never gone to war by itself. They do so only when others attack and Russians will fight to protect their lands. I hope more people understand this as there is now a lot of propaganda going on against Russia."

ACRONIS OPENS INTERNATIONAL HQ IN SINGAPORE

Serguei Beloussov, CEO of Acronis, a leading global IT solutions provider announces plans to focus on international markets from here



The new office of Acronis will be located at Suntec City and it will enable expansion of the Singapore-based team which is currently at 25 to 60 over the next two years. "Even though we will move to our new premises as early as this summer, we plan an official opening ceremony of the new office in November 2014. Furthermore, we are also considering opening an engineering centre in Singapore with 20-50 key engineers. Acronis views Singapore as a fantastic platform for hiring IT talent and cover APAC regional requirements," explained Mr Beloussov.

Acronis has highly skilled IT staff in Singapore supporting technical and pre-sales activity across the region and also technical training and evangelist. In Singapore, Acronis plans to strengthen itself as a regional hub for IT specific job. Being a major technical hub in Southeast Asia, recruiting IT personal from the pool of talent in the Island city is an easy process.

Since its establishment, Acronis has two tier channel model and has successfully joined hands with distribution partner ixix Distribution. "Other channel partners in Singapore are NCS Pte Ltd, 3D Networks Singapore Pte Ltd, Topaz Solutions Pte Ltd, etc."

Apart from providing IT solutions and services, Acronis has also established an Academy Training and Certification courses. According to Mr Beloussov, "Acronis University is about empowering our partner business. Knowledge is key to our partner community. Be it bigger deals, higher close rates or shorter pre-sales cycles, Acronis® Academy™ training & certification courses will help to build sales and technical expertise in Acronis products to achieve all that and more."

Founded in Singapore as part of SWsoft in 2000, Acronis is the leading global provider of backup, disaster recovery, and secure file sharing and file access solutions. In 2004, Acronis became a separate business entity employing over 650 personnel and its products are sold in over 18 locations worldwide and 13 languages. In Singapore, Acronis has established itself as a fast-growing international company providing complete, efficient and reliable backup solutions for desktop, server, virtual and cloud environments as well as leading file sharing and sync solutions for mobile devices.

Today, Acronis protects the data of over 5 million consumers and 300,000 businesses in over 130 countries. It is a truly global company with a strong focus on Asia. This year, the company announced the opening of its international headquarters in Singapore

and is placing a special emphasis on protecting data in the Asian market. "Singapore will not be an Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ) headquarters but Acronis' International Headquarters. That will include Europe, Middle East and Africa and Emerging Markets. The growth of our market in APJ and the large opportunity here, were key criteria in selecting Singapore but we view Singapore as a great location in order to support International expansion even outside APJ," said Serguei Beloussov, CEO of Acronis.

He further added, "I have been a Singaporean Citizen since 2000 and investing in Singapore is also a way for us to back to our business roots. We also believe APJ would be 50 per cent of Acronis global business in five years – that is why we have decided to make Singapore our international headquarters."



SOLO CROSSING OF THE PACIFIC

Fyodor Konyukhov sets off on a solo rowing journey across the Pacific Ocean from Chile to Australia

He is the only person in the world to have reached extreme points of our planet: the North Pole, South Pole, the Pole of Inaccessibility in the Arctic Ocean, the top of Mount Everest, among others. He is Russian survivalist and explorer, Fyodor Konyukhov.

With his sights set on conquering the Pacific Ocean by rowing alone from Chile, South America to Australia, Konyukhov plans to be the first person to row across this vast stretch of ocean. Having set off for the ambitious expedition last December, he plans to end the 9,000 nautical-mile voyage in Brisbane, Australia 200 days later on his English-built boat, Turgoyak, Konyukhov.

In the past, Konyukhov has won numerous accolades for his courage and adventurous spirit and was the first Russian mountaineer to conquer the seven summits challenge, where he climbed seven of the world's highest mountains across the seven continents.

Rough open ocean

Rowing across the Pacific Ocean is fraught with unexpected challenges and dangers as strong winds, high tides and rough conditions can pose threat to life. Rowing solo across 9000 miles of open ocean without possibility of resupply of crucial food and water is also another concern. To make matters worse, severe storms and high tides develop in the South Pacific during this time of the year. According to his estimate, Konyukhov hopes to complete the crossing in just six months, averaging an impressive 40 nautical miles per day.

Equipped for calamity

Overcoming insurmountable odds requires state-of-the-art equipment and technology. In order to ensure that he survives his solo trip successfully, Konyukhov has fitted his boat with desalination systems to provide clean drinking water and also stocked with plenty of food for months at sea. It will also have satellite communications systems, solar panels for generating power, GPS navigation and a variety of other equipment designed to keep him safe while out on the water. A small and comfortable cabin will provide refuge from the elements and a place to sleep at the end of a long day working the oars.

Konyukhov has already conquered vast sea distances in a

rowing boat before this. In 2002, he crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 46 days on his boat Uralaz, setting a world record where his best passages covered 100 nautical miles in a day.

Encounter with surreal creatures

On his journey across the open ocean, Konyukhov has been witness to the wonders and marvels of nature in all its glory. In late January, the intrepid adventurer was accompanied by a flock of flying fish. "Like an escort of honour, the beautiful sight of flying fish joining me as I rowed the boat was a surreal feeling. They have been looking at me, bewildered as well to see a man rowing and using his oars like wings," he said in a radio message. Jumping over five meters above the churning water, the fishes kept him company across a considerable distance.

Drinking water runs out

By mid April, Konyukhov had entered the last leg of his ambitious journey and just as he was preparing to heave a sigh of relief, he ran into drinking water problem. While communicating with Moscow, he revealed that he was facing a shortage of drinking water as the desalination system was malfunctioning. "The apparatus was producing heavy noise instead of a drop of water and on further inspection I saw that the pipe pulling water from the ocean was filled with water plants. I dived down into the water and cleared the pipe with screwdriver," he reported.

Antarctic cold winds

As Konyukhov crossed into the Southern Hemisphere, he is lashed by heavy storms and cold winds making it difficult for him to keep going. "The weather forecast has promised moderate weather after a couple of days. After that, again a storm approaches, this time from the west. It threatens me with strong wind blowing head on. With God's help, I intend to make it to the west coast of Australia," he said.

With just over 1,400 nautical miles to navigate, Fyodor Konyukhov is expected to reach his final destination at Brisbane, Australia by late May. While he reports that his days of adventure at the high sea are coming to an end, he is already planning his next project. "As unpredictable as she is, the ocean has provided me with all the resources I need for surviving - water, food and fresh wind. But the concluding stage of expedition is always the toughest. I pray to God that he protects me through the treacherous waters ahead."

REACHING RUSSIA THROUGH E-COMMERCE

By Leighton Peter Prabhu

In the summer of 2014 foreign investment relations between Russia and the West are in a state of uncertainty, reinforcing existing trends within Russia to 'pivot' its economic outlook towards the East. We could be on the brink of a new golden era of cooperation between Russia and Asia.

And the interest is definitely mutual. Russia is an attractive market for foreign companies, with a per-capita income that places it solidly within the middle-income category. Moreover, Moscow, with a population of roughly 12 million, is the largest city in Europe, serves as both the political and economic summit of the country, and has consumption patterns on par with the leading cities of the world.

large, with products suited to their lower income levels. Singapore-based Golden Eagle, for example, has managed to build its instant coffee brand in Russia with no discernible presence in Moscow. Shoppers are moving online, especially in the regions.

Not only is Moscow the largest city in Europe, but the Russian online population surpassed Germany's last year, and is destined to become the

largest consumer market in Europe in short order. Growth in Internet access and usage will continue to be robust over the medium term, and Russians are increasingly comfortable with online shopping although there are specific peculiarities which are discussed below.

While currently representing a small share of total retail sales (roughly three per cent) there has been a flood of interest from international companies. Several local groups have attracted significant venture funding, and are trying to establish themselves as the dominant e-commerce marketplaces.

The online trend is particularly suited to Russia's geography - consumers in far flung regional cities gain expanded selection of goods via e-commerce, as this channel leap frogs underdeveloped bricks and mortar retail. Even in the face of domestic economic uncertainty, the trend towards online shopping will continue, as it has the potential for improving the efficiency of the retail supply chain.

What do Russians buy online?

The Russian online market is currently skewed towards standardised electronics and technology products, where the specifications are well known. However, the fastest growing segment is clothing, footwear and accessories (CFA).

Peculiarities of the Russian e-commerce market

At the same time, the Russian online market has a few peculiarities which necessitate a degree of localisation. To begin with, a large majority of Russians don't speak English, so an online seller must offer at least a partially translated website in order to appeal to the mass market. At a minimum, key information such as payment and delivery options should be in Russian. Depending on the nature of products being sold, it may not be necessary to undertake full translation of the product descriptions themselves.

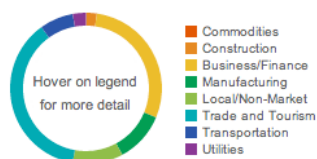
Russian buyers are also more likely to communicate with the online seller prior to purchase. Most Russian websites display their local contact numbers prominently, and offer toll-free telephone as well as chat support. Sellers will typically call each buyer after receiving an online order, to confirm the order details, product availability, and payment and delivery methods.



Moscow has partially recovered from a major recession. It is outperforming Russia on employment change, but is lagging on GDP per capita change.

Industrial structure

Share of metro area output by industry (2012)



Sizing up

Moscow in 2012

GDP:	\$520.1 billion
Population:	11,616,623
GDP per capita:	\$44,774
Employment:	6,245,518

Source: Brookings Institution - <http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/globalmetro-monitor-3>

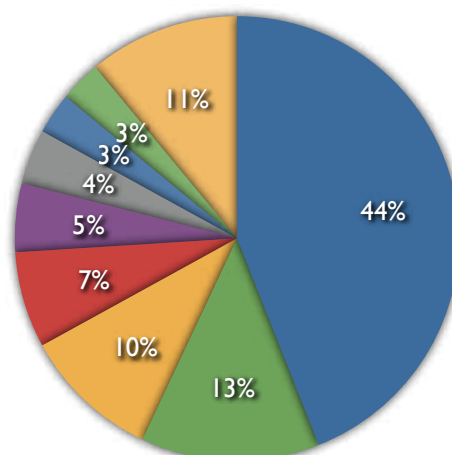
This has not escaped the notice of international luxury brands. US-based Tiffany & Co. is the most recent arrival, opening their two-level flagship store in GUM, right off the Red Square, in early 2014.

Moscow vs the regions

While Moscow could be a wealthy country in its own right in terms of economic power, 90 per cent of the Russian population lives outside of Moscow. It's perfectly viable to avoid Moscow and focus on the mass market in the country at

- Electronics / technology
- Clothing & footwear
- Automobile parts
- Housewares & furniture
- Children's items
- Cosmetics & perfumes
- Books & CDs
- Foodstuffs
- Other

Source: Data Insight (2012)



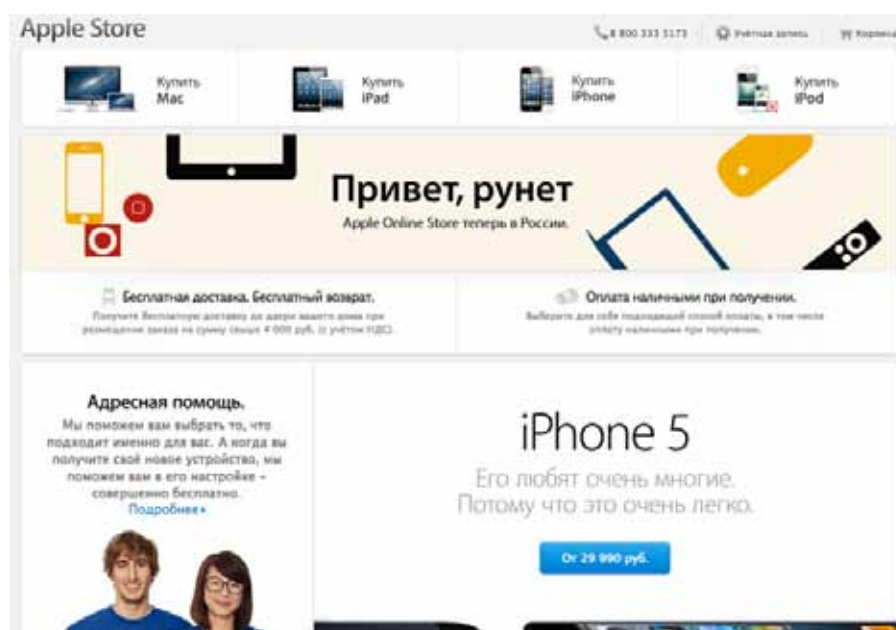
Another significant issue arises with online payment systems. Russia-based online sellers, in most categories other than travel, conduct the majority of their business on a cash-on-delivery basis. This is impractical for a purely offshore seller, and without a local agent it further restricts the potential reach of an online store's appeal, particularly if that store has no brand recognition in Russia.

Finally, the key online marketing platforms in Russia differ from the rest of the world. In keyword advertising, Yandex is the main player with a plus 60 per cent market share in search. In social media, VK and Odnoklassniki attract a far larger audience than Facebook, although Facebook is closing the gap and generally attracts a more worldly user base. Adapting marketing programs to Russia not only involves translation but requires specialist knowledge about the Russian-specific platforms.

Where are the opportunities for Singaporean companies?

For Singaporean companies in the consumer market, entering Russia as a direct online seller is a relatively low risk strategy, enabling a company to test the Russian market's receptiveness. An online strategy can be very specific in terms of targeting cities and demographic groups. However, localisation is a necessity.

One example is the Singapore online project called Snapped, which sells customised laptop sleeves and mobile phone cases. Snapped has been active in Russia since 2012 and has adapted both its website and operations for Russian users. Through a local partner, Snapped offers Russian customer service and local payment methods, including cash-on-delivery. To save on



the time and expense of drop shipping individual orders, the company also stocks its most popular items in Russia and is able to fulfill orders immediately, with periodic stock replenishments. They sell directly from their website, as well as through third-party online platforms in Russia. Apart from being direct online sellers, opportunities exist in modernising the transport and warehousing infrastructure. Changi Airport has already been advising certain Russian cities on their airport development plans. Singapore has a lot of expertise in logistics and warehousing automation as well.

Financing and ownership of modern warehouses are also options for financial investors, with yields on Russian investments offering significant premiums over western European markets. Russia is also moving towards a self-sufficient domestic payments system, and companies with deep technical expertise in this domain

would see demand from Russian banks and other financial institutions.

A staged approach

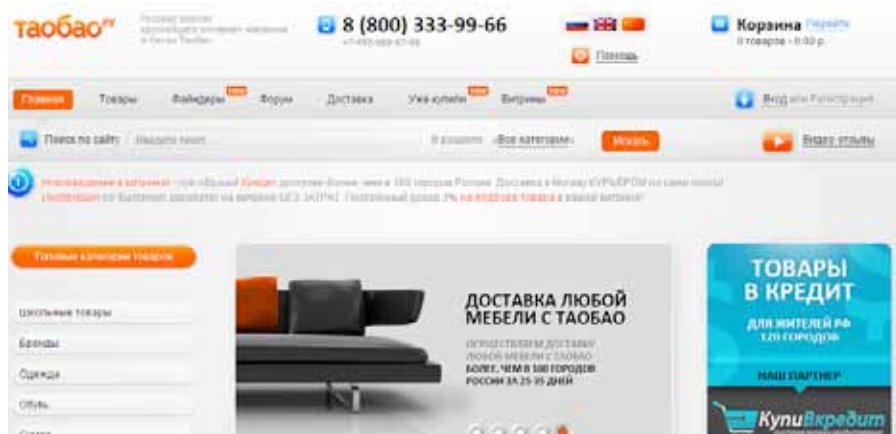
Most foreign retailers in Russia have seen impressive growth from their Russian operations and have a very positive overall experience. However, short-term opportunistic approaches will not work well.

As elsewhere, Russian consumers need repeated exposure to new brands before reaching purchase readiness. While cross-border selling is a good way to get started, with time and success the benefits of investing in a local operation becomes evident.

While vicissitudes are part and parcel of any emerging market, Russia's fundamentals are undeniable and globally-oriented companies should take a closer look at the market, before their local rivals become too entrenched. For good business models are easier to replicate than ever before.

About the Author

LSP Prabhu is a partner with Interstice Consulting LLP (Moscow, Singapore), focusing on e-commerce business development. The above article is Copyright (C) 2014 Interstice Consulting LLP. All rights reserved. No part of this article may be reproduced in part or in full, in any form, without express written consent.





CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF SOCHI WINTER OLYMPICS

Basking in the afterglow, Russia establishes itself as world's top sporting nation in 2014

Ever since the International Olympics Committee (IOC) took the decision to host the games in Sochi back in July 2007, there were those who questioned the wisdom of holding the winter games in a sub-tropical resort. Indeed, these were to be the hottest winter Olympics ever held: even at its coldest, Sochi rarely drops below 12C. In fact, so warm was the temperate climate that the alpine and Nordic events had to be held in the nearby mountain resort of Rosa Khutor, at Krasnaya Polyana.

But through technological endeavour and a huge budget, Sochi proved to be a resounding success for everyone who attended: Spectators, organisers and athletes from around the world were universally impressed with the facilities on offer.

Most Expensive Games Ever

Hailed as 'the most expensive games ever', Sochi certainly lived up to its billing. With a price tag of US\$51 billion (SG\$ 64.59) no expense was spared on making this an incredible experience for competitors and spectators alike. With the majority of the investment spent on infrastructure and legacy buildings the impact on Sochi cannot be understated. Sochi now boasts 11 ultra-modern facilities, ranging from the Bolshoi Ice Dome to fantastic Adler Arena.

The infrastructure has so impressed all who attended that Sochi is rumoured to be hosting the Russian Grand Prix after President Putin reportedly met with F1's Bernie Ecclestein in early March. His legacy is particularly impressive when taking into account, the impact that the Games had on the global perception of Russian sport at large.

Russian Dominance in Medal Counts

Russia dominated the medal table with a series of resounding victories over their foreign counterparts. In the figure skating competitions, the Russian Olympians were impressive and their performance was not lost on the international sports-fan community who applauded a standout record from the hosts. Overall, Russia topped the medal table with 13 Gold, of a total 33, beating nearest rivals Norway's gold haul of 11, 26 total, giving them a clear nine medal margin.

Russian figure skater Yulia Lipnitskaya wowed audiences throughout the world as she won gold in figure skating at the record-breaking age of 15. Thailand's Vanessa Mae was equally impressive in her devotion to the task of representing her country despite her background as a violin impresario giving her zero qualification in the Nordic event of downhill skiing. Her time was the longest in the women's giant slalom.

Competitive Debut

New arrivals to the Winter Olympics scene, Dominica (North America), East Timor (Asia), Malta (Europe), Paraguay (South America), Togo and Zimbabwe (Africa) and Tonga (Oceania) all impressed in their debut year, although none won medals. This was also the first Olympics to see Women's ski-jumping, Ski half pipe and ten other inaugural events.

The Indian Luge and Jamaican Bobsleigh teams benefited from a viral social media campaign to assist their efforts in getting to Sochi, which utilised cryptocurrency Dogecoin to raise \$37,000 in funds. This is a first time where, a cryptocurrency has been used for a large-scale sports-sponsorship endeavour and is bound to be grabbed up by proponents of the financial system as a sign of its coming of age. (However, it is worth mentioning that Dogecoin is relatively unknown compared to more established crypto-currencies such as BitCoin)

Weighing in favour of those who can practice the Alpine sports, The Netherlands proved that a solid performance on the ice can be enough to take you to surprising levels of success- placing 5th with eight gold medals won almost exclusively in speed-skating along with the Dutch achieving a record-breaking four clean podium sweeps in the sports.



Gerard Dielessen, secretary of the Dutch Olympic Committee says, "We want to dominate [at speed skating]. So the distance we have now between us and the other countries, we are proud of that. It's a challenge for us to keep the distance. What we say to the other countries, well, they failed. They have to train harder."

Breaking Records at Sochi

Emotions ran high throughout the competition, but none could quite match the power of Super-G Bronze medallist Bode Miller's tearful post-win interview. The 36 year-old broke the record for the oldest ever winter Olympic medal-winner, and then broke down on camera as he dedicated his victory to his recently-departed brother, who died last April.

Russia's Albert Demchenko and Japan's Noriaki Kasai also entered the world record books with their seventh Olympics appearances in Luge and Ski-jumping respectively. Team Canada's ladies curling squad became the first team to go undefeated in their entire campaign, with an 11-0 scorecard.

Equally impressive was Japan's Yuzuru Hanyu short figure-skating score of 101.45. The gold-winning score marked the first time anyone has broken the 100 point barrier. But without a doubt the most impressive new record goes to Norwegians Ole Einar Bjoerndalen and Marit Bjoergen. Bjoerndalean won two biathlon Gold medals, taking his lifetime tally to a record-breaking 13 medals; while Bjoergen won three cross-country skiing Gold medals, tying her as most-decorated female winter Olympian with 10 medals.



The games cost
\$51 billion,
a new record



2,873 athletes
from **88** nations
participated



4.1 billion viewers
watched the games on
464 networks, **155** websites
and **75** apps



The first Winter Games-
held in 1924 in Chamonix, France-
hosted **258** competitors
from **16** nations



26 countries won medals



1.1 million
tickets were sold

Torch Relay

Sochi boasted four Olympic firsts in the journey of the hallowed flame. Runners not only took the torch to the depths of Lake Baikal and the top of the Caucasus's highest peak- Mount Elbrus- but also to the North pole and even to space, with an extraordinary visit to the International Space Station (ISS).

Flight Soyuz eventually took TMA-11M to the International Space Station. The spacecraft itself was adorned with Olympic-themed livery including the Games' emblem. Russian cosmonauts Oleg Kotov and Sergey Ryazansky even took the torch on a spacewalk outside the ISS. The torch returned to Earth five days later on board Soyuz TMA-09M. Over 123 days and 64,000 km (excluding orbits), 14,000 carriers took the torch on its record-breaking journey.

The journey started in Ancient Olympia on 29 September 2013 and travelled through Greece for a week and then to Russia. From Moscow, on 7 October 2013, the torch travelled through 83 Russian cities before arriving at Sochi on the day of the opening ceremony, 7 February 2014. It was the longest torch relay in Olympic history, a 40,000-mile route that passed through all regions of the country, from Kaliningrad in the west to Chukotka in the east.

SHAPING DESTINIES ACROSS THE GLOBE

Leading education service provider, Educare has ventured overseas to Russia after successfully implementing projects throughout China and Southeast Asia

Since its inception in 2004 by the Singapore Teachers' Union and its five institutional members, Educare has grown in leaps and bounds expanding its footprints across Asia and has successfully ventured beyond to Russia. Over the years, Educare has been providing aid and support to schools and teachers, ensuring progression of both the quality of teaching and of teachers' lives.

Educare's diverse spectrum of services range from manpower provision to IT expertise to professional development and has been working with local and international institutions of learning. "We have focused on expanding our services to work with government and schools across Asia, so we are excited to share our experiences and learn from other countries in the region. With "Shaping Destinies" as our mission, we look forward to working with international partners to change mindsets of educators and nurture students so that they become successful in their life and career in the 21st century," says Liliia Mukhametshina, Chief Representative, RF & CIS, Educare Cooperative Ltd.

Educare in Tatarstan

Educare has expanded its presence and scope in Russia especially in Tatarstan where it has been engaged by the country's Institute of Education Development (IED) to conduct need analysis, lesson observations and provide training to 240 teachers.

Educare also further conducted intensive Master Teachers Programme. Upon completion of the programme, Tatarstan's Ministry of Education and Science engaged Educare for a further three-year 'Enhancing Teaching Quality' to support the government's holistic education improvement efforts. "Educare is one of the first Singapore education companies that have close collaboration with Tatarstan. Thus far it has been four fruitful years of collaborative work aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in the Republic," explains Ms Mukhametshina.

She further adds, "In fact, more than 20,000 educators of all ranks from beginning teachers, university professors and high level MOES officials have benefitted from these efforts. Having

started with professional development for teachers, our scope of services now caters across the spectrum to include in-depth capacity building, thus it is a holistic and systemic change."

The success of the project conducted in Tatarstan, prompted Chelny (a district in eastern Tatarstan) to engage Educare's service directly where a six day workshop was conducted between April and June 2013 for the district's school leaders.

Partners in Education

Educare is today one of the most trusted professional development partners in education and are playing a crucial role in the 21st century global classroom. "We expect our students to become self-directed lifelong learners. Understanding that the teachers are no longer the only source of information or knowledge, they have to constantly go beyond their professional boundaries in this day and age. Therefore, educators have to act as a role model and become lifelong learners themselves. We should not think of professional development as simply workshops. Job-embedded professional development, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and ICT-supported collaborative work should become part of the school culture and day-to-day practice," feels Ms Mukhametshina.

Future of school education

A McKinsey report states that no education system can exceed the quality of its teachers. Today, there is an urgent call for an education system that equips students with 21st century competencies and skills. While teachers are no longer the only source of information, only teachers are able to groom and equip students with these competencies. Educare steps in to fill this gap and train the educators in imparting the right education to 21st century students. Ms Mukhametshina says, "One of the challenges educational institutions are facing is in changing the mindsets of our current educators. If we expect students to be lifelong learners, teachers must become role models. Another challenge is the ability to foresee and predict global trends and challenges so we can equip them to be ready for the future."



Educare presented its programmes in Tartanstan to the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Mr Igor Shuvalov and President of Tartanstan, Mr Rustam Minnikhanov

Singapore

The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands
B2-226, Canal Level
Tel : +65 6688 7490

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THE FINEST GARMENT FOR MEN IN THE WORLD



FOOD EMPIRE EXPANDING WITH NEW PRODUCTS & AUTOMATION

Food Empire's future lies in a comprehensive diversification programme in Russia's F&B sector

In an exclusive interview with Opportunity Russia, Mr Amrish Rungta, in-charge of Food Empire's manufacturing operations in Russia and Ukraine shared the various ways in which the organisation prepares itself in meeting challenges in the future. A chartered accountant by profession, the 45-year old Kolkata-born has worked in Moscow for over 20 years, the last 13 of them with Food Empire.

"Currently, Food Empire has a factory in Russia, just outside Moscow and another in Ukraine, near Cherkassy. We have diversified our production lines by putting more advanced automated packing lines producing new SKU (Stock Keeping Unit) such as Doy Pack for packing Freeze Dry Coffee, Agglomerated coffee, Chicory etc. We also use automated stick packing machines to pack our products in new premium stick packs," he explained.

From a humble start, producing coffee mix bags, Food Empire has grown into a multinational conglomerate with over US\$237.67 million turnover providing US\$21.5 million in profits (FY 2012). The Food Empire group of companies' main focus is still on beverages with the beverages division contributing to 94 per cent of its turnover. There is still much headroom for growth with new packaging technology being applied to new products. According to him, consumer demand is driving these products, "The growth is coming from our new products, like Freeze Dry coffee in Doy Packs, Freeze Dry in Glass Jars, Coffee 3-in-1 sticks, Chicory, Roast and Ground Coffee etc."

"Currently, the Ukraine plant, which has a production capacity of 100 million sachets per month, is supplying mainly to its domestic market as well as to markets in Russia, Belarus and Moldavia. There are plans to start supplying to other CIS (Commonwealth Independent States) countries soon from this factory."

Upgrading to keep up with market demands

Food Empire's factory in Russia was opened in 2005 with semi-automated packing lines that were shifted from the Singapore factory. Since then, Food Empire has upgraded the Russian factory to keep up with market demands. Mr Rungta added, "We have invested in more sophisticated and automated machines from Japan and Europe. Manpower can be costly in Russia, hence we are focusing on automating the process wherever possible. We have a separate engineering department that works full time on automation projects. We will continue to invest in the latest technology and advanced machines from Europe and Asia."

Today, Food Empire holds the largest share, about 50 per cent, in the coffee mix market in Russia. The company is proud that this is bigger than Nestle and Kraft's share. After being in the market for over 20 years, its flagship brand – MacCoffee – has polled more than 70 per cent in brand awareness surveys. Last year, the company sold over 150 million coffee mix sachets every month in Russia and Ukraine. Currently, the outputs of the Russia and Ukraine factories are being sold mainly in their domestic markets and some to CIS countries like Kazakhstan, Belarus and Moldavia.

RUSSIA AT SINGAPORE AIRSHOW 2014

UAC debuts its Superjet 100 and Yak-130 at Asia's largest airshow in 2014

Russian aircraft makers at the biannual Singapore Airshow announced that they are expecting to manufacture approximately 150 military and civilian aircraft this year. According to a report by Russian news agency, RIA Novosti, Mr Andrei Boginsky, who heads the aviation construction department at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, "The plan for 2014 stipulates production of over 100 combat aircraft and 46 civilian planes, including 40 Sukhoi Superjets."

The report added that Russia built 132 aircraft, including 100 military and 32 civilian planes in 2013. Boginsky said that Russia currently makes two Superjet 100 planes every month and revealed plans to boost production to three Superjets per month in order to meet demand for the jets.

The Superjet 100 is a short-medium haul passenger aircraft developed by Sukhoi in cooperation with US and European aviation corporations, including Boeing, Snecma, Thales, Messier Dowty, Liebherr Aerospace and Honeywell. Sukhoi has so far received over 200 orders for Superjet 100 airliners.

One of the highlights of the airshow which attracted 40,000 trade visitors from all over the world, were aircraft displays that included Russian Helicopters Ka-62. Russian Helicopters is a subsidiary of Oboronprom (part of State Corporation Rostec) and the company had demonstrated the new Ka-62 multirole helicopter to commercial helicopter operators from across the Asia Pacific Region. Russian Helicopters also presented mock-ups of Mi-171A2, Ka-32A11VS, Ka-62 and Mi-35M helicopters.

In the commercial sector, Russian aircraft-makers like Sukhoi have found Asia to be a lucrative market for growth especially for smaller jet and turboprop passenger aircraft. Markets like India (where currently only one per cent of the population flies) and



Sukhoi Superjet 100

the opening of second and third tier cities throughout Southeast Asia has resulted in a forecast for 1,500 new jets of 70 to 130 seats over the next 20 years. According to one manufacturer, this translates to US\$70 billion worth of business.

Russia was represented at the Airshow by United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) which comprise of Irkut Corporation, Sukhoi Holding Company, Sukhoi Civil Aircraft Company, Beriev Aircraft Company; Russian Helicopters Holding Company; Rostvertol (Rostov), Ulan-Ude Aviation Plant (Ulan-Ude), Kamov Design Bureau (Lubertsy, Moscow Region) and Mil Moscow Helicopter Plant (Moscow).

UAC had showcased their models of Yak-130 operational trainer, Su-35 multi-role super-maneuvrable fighter, T-50 fighter, Sukhoi Superjet 100, MS-21 and Be-200 civil aircraft. UAC's delegation headed by its President, Mr Mikhail Pogosyan, showcased its civil and military aircraft and the Airshow was the debut of the Sukhoi Superjet 100 and Yak-130 aircraft.

Yak-130 Mitten Debut

The Yak-130 Mitten jet trainer/light attack aircraft is the first completely new combat trainer built in Russia. The subsonic two-seat aircraft was developed by the Yakovlev design bureau. It is a highly manoeuvrable plane with an extended range of about 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles) and a maximum speed of 1,060 kilometers (600 miles) per hour in level flight. It can carry a combat payload of up to 3,000 kilograms (6,600 pounds), consisting of a variety of Russian and Western developed weapons. The jet makes an appearance here after just few weeks earlier the CEO of Russia's state arms export agency, Rosoboron export, confirmed the sale of 24 jets to Bangladesh.

In 2012, Russia was the world's second-largest arms exporter for the second year running, exporting US\$15.2 billion worth of weaponry to a list of about 80 other foreign customers. Sales of aircraft traditionally account for about 40 per cent of Russian arms sales abroad, according to government statistics.



Yak-130 Mitten jet

Source: Ronnie McDonald

(Right) Mr Manglani in his favourite Italian JM Icon suit
(Inset) with daughter, Anita Manglani, Uomo has
an elite Russian clientele such as Mr Vladimir
Zhirinovskiy, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party
of Russia



FROM RUSSIA WITH STYLE

Johnny Manglani, Founder of UOMO GROUP, first made his mark in Moscow and now Uomo Collezioni is poised to conquer Asia

As far as brands are concerned, in the high-end men's luxury wear, it is dominated by one name in Moscow: Uomo Collezioni, a unique multi-brand concept which brings "Best of the Best" of Italy to discerning gentlemen who desire only the best and want to make a statement with their own individual style.

Today there are 12 Uomo Collezioni boutiques in Russia and the man behind the spectacular success is Mr Johnny Manglani, founder of UOMO GROUP which is synonymous to exclusive men's fashion boutique catering to the Who's Who in business, government and diplomatic circles. Mumbai-born and now Singapore-based, Mr Manglani spent majority of his working life in Russia.

Operating a chain of luxury menswear boutiques in Moscow and Singapore, Uomo Collezioni under the expert guidance of Mr Manglani is focused on delivering the finest quality and authentic Made-In-Italy craftsmanship at the highest level. The idea behind Uomo Collezioni's luxury boutiques comes from famous boutiques in London, Milan and Paris where those with high taste can shop in privacy and comfort. During the 1990's in Moscow, this was a nonexistent concept and when the first Uomo Collezioni boutique threw its door open in 1998, it gained the patronage of business and political elite of Moscow despite of a huge economic crisis.

Dressing the Crème de la Crème

Mr Manglani, the man who dresses the crème de la crème of Russian society, maintains an impressive list of clients which includes government officials, politicians, celebrities, sportsmen, business people and prominent industrialists. According to him, Russia is a land of opportunity that offers success to those who embrace its strong culture. "To those who respect its culture, diversity and traditions, Russia is a land of plenty. It is important to deliver on one's promises and very important to understand that Russia has its own system - positives and negatives exist everywhere in the world. My advice is to maximise on the positives and appreciate the good things Russia has to offer. It is one of the largest countries by land mass in the world with 140 million strong population driven by consumerism and good spending power."

Today, UOMO GROUP is considered Asia's leader in luxury menswear and the boutiques it represents are flagship store Uomo Collezioni, Stefano Ricci, Brioni, Santoni, Zilli and more. Having won numerous awards such as 'Company of the Year for Quality and Service' award by RBC channel (2007), 'Best Fashion Brand for Gentlemen' award by the prestigious World Fashion Channel (2009), Uomo Group's home-grown brand Uomo Collezioni takes the credit for introducing high fashion for men to Russia and Asia.

Growing from strength-to-strength, Mr Manglani shares his enthusiasm for men's fashion with his clients. Having been in the market since 20 years, he has seen the ups and downs of fashion in Russia and across the world. He says, "Today's fashion scene (in Russia) is in complete contrast to how it was 20 years back. Dark brown suits made from the thickest and strongest material were the norm combined with big checkered shirts and funny ties." He smiles and recalls, "Being there for more than 30 years, I have seen it all: Brown suits, later on shiny jogging suits during perestroika, followed by black suits. Today's successful Russians though dress very smartly and elegantly and they really appreciate the finer things in life and are very knowledgeable about what they buy, quality, materials, details and the total look to them is very important."

Elaborating on the current fashion market in Russia, Mr Manglani explains, "There is a strong prevalent fashion sense in all walks of life in Russia. While there is no such code or guidelines as to how officials should dress, people in responsible positions do tend to dress in a conservative but a stylish manner in dark suits, blazers, etc."

Conquering Asia

While Uomo Collezioni's flagship store in Singapore set up at the Shoppes@Marina Bay Sands is all set to celebrate its fifth anniversary in September, Mr Manglani feels that Singapore is a 'Window to Asia'

with its integrated resorts, strong tourism, medical hub, etc. "Fashion for men in Asia is fast emerging and we are right in the forefront with our Singapore boutique achieving great success. We have been growing at a tremendous pace since setting up here and have established a benchmark for quality and service. When we initially came here, we found that the men's fashion scene was slightly behind other global markets. But looking at today's business, fashion for men in Asia is gaining ground," he says. Recently, UOMO GROUP opened its latest store in Macau and intends to get a foothold and reach the affluent rich in China.

With its three primary core principles - excellent quality, superb service and attention to details - UOMO GROUP has redefined men's luxury fashion wear. At UOMO GROUP, fashion is not only about beautiful clothes but about making sure clients receive the quality and service they deserve; all UOMOGROUP boutiques are designed for shopping in comfort and luxury with Private Shopping Suites assuring discreet shopping.

However, for Mr Manglani, the issue of expansion inside Russia has been another matter. "Uomo Collezioni's strategy in Russia has always been to grow organically rather than aggressively. In order to keep the exclusivity of our products and brand in mind."

Su Misura Services for discerning shoppers

Offering the ultimate in choice and quality, Uomo's Su Misura (made-to-measure) services from Italy extends unparalleled experience in custom clothing. A market leader in custom tailoring for many years, 'Made in Italy' is prevalent in all Uomo Collezioni collections and is a core value of the

brand. All Su - Misura items embrace the *fatto a mano* (handmade) tradition, being crafted in Italy by master artisans according to timeless Italian tailoring traditions using the most luxurious fabrics from Europe's best mills.

According to Mr Manglani, "When it comes to Men's fashion, Italy is still the best and will continue to be the best for many years to come, nowhere in the world can you find artisans involved in making clothes except Italy. UOMO GROUP is all about exclusive fashion; Made in Italy is a core value of the group and will continue to be so. We never want to be a mass company and so we do not cut costs, our philosophy is boutique rather than supermarket, quality rather than quantity. Our customers do not fear paying good money for great quality, why should we fear making great quality?"

Clients have the luxury to choose from over 2000 fabrics and an array of customised styles and exquisite details that make their clothing unique. Master tailors and artisans are frequently present at Uomo Collezioni boutiques giving personal advice to clients on latest fashion trends and styles.

Living and Breathing fashion

Being a very successful entrepreneur, Mr Manglani attributes his success to the way he keeps a finger on the pulse of fashion scene. He reveals, "I live and breathe the life of our clients. Many of our clients are my personal friends and this gives me an advantage. I study their lifestyles, their buying habits and tastes. It's fashion intelligence from the frontline and we are very involved as a family in all scenes every year: skiing, beach, cruise and all. This helps me cater to all needs and think about every fashion item possible."



(Above left:) Mr Manglani pictured here in Uomo's flagship store in Moscow. (Above right:) Stylish examples from Johnny Manglani's own signature line – the ultra exclusive JM Icon.
(Top:) Billionaire Couture – the latest brand launched by Uomo; (middle & above:) Italian flair & fashion from the Uomo Collezioni line



Source: 11.12 Gallery

RUSSIAN ART INSPIRES ASIAN MARKET

Contemporary Russian artists find footing in Singapore with the help of 11.12 Gallery

Art recognises neither cultural nor geographical barriers. Its universal appeal has helped exotic Russian artwork and paintings gain popular ground in Southeast Asia. Pioneering the Russian art gallery scene in Singapore is 11.12 Gallery which opened its doors here in November 2012. The Gallery's expressed aim is to showcase diverse works of talented Russian artists to Asia and give Asian collectors a feel of Russian contemporary art.

The gallery's owners, Elvira Sharov and Alexander Sharov, opened their first gallery in Moscow. "It was called the Winzavod Contemporary Art Centre and it enjoyed great success as Russians are very supportive of local artists. During our career as gallery owners and curators, we uncovered great talent and wished to share a piece of Russian culture and art with the rest of the world," says Ms Elvira Sharov, Director of 11.12 Gallery.

The couple decided to settle down in Singapore where they could observe the opportunities in the art market. "We decided to settle down here because the art industry is emerging and full of potential and opportunities. Moreover, Singapore is a melting pot of different cultures and nationalities. It is a country that allows us to reach out to locals, expats and tourists all in one place," adds Ms Sharov. The gallery works with talented young artists who

are recognised for their unique style and technique when constructing their pieces. "As we are the pioneering Russian art gallery in Singapore, we had to put in much effort to introduce the art and the artists to local collectors and art connoisseurs. We have received a very warm response from the public, with special interest in artists like Rinat Voligamsi, Alexey Alpatov and Maxim Bashev. We also observed that Asians particularly take to the realism genre, which is evident in Alexey Alpatov's works," explains Ms Sharov.

11.12 Gallery also works with painters Studio 30, Vladimir Kolesnikov, Andrey Syaglov, Damir Muratov, Vladimir Semensky etc and specialises in Russian contemporary artists working in different styles – from abstract to neo-realism and expressionism. The gallery also works with sculptors such as Olga Muravina and Sergey Sobolev.

Elaborating on how the art works have been received in Asia, she reveals, "Russian art is increasingly gaining traction in the Asian-Pacific market. For example, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Hong Kong, purchased a Vova Marin, while the White Rabbit museum in Sydney, Australia, currently owns a few works by Rinat Voligamsi." The gallery's repertoire of artists includes Max Bashev and Aleksey Morozov, whose works were purchased by the Moscow Museum of Modern Art and the Russian State Museum in St Petersburg. The work of Sasha Birulin was located to the museum of contemporary art in Beijing.

The Gallery will be participating in high-profile exhibitions such as Art Basel SCOPE in June and be a part of Singapore-based exhibitions in Helutrance Space, ArtApart, which has a key focus on Russian art, and is supported by Russian Ambassador, Leonid Moiseev.

Elvira and Alexander Sharov





SWAN LAKE BY BOLSHOI BALLET STUNNED AUDIENCE IN ITS DEBUT PERFORMANCE IN SINGAPORE

As the last heart wrenching note faded and the curtain descended on the stage, a spellbound audience at Singapore's Esplanade Theatre showed their appreciation with thunderous applause

The Swan Lake presented by the world renowned Bolshoi Ballet, in its only appearance in Asia last year, captivated everyone with its enchanting dance masterpiece of love, tragedy, deception and drama. After two decades of absence, the Bolshoi Ballet returned to Singapore with the stunningly successful ballet classic, the Swan Lake, on 20-24 November 2013 at the Esplanade Theatre.

Set to the lilting background score of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky performed by the 66-strong Singapore Lyric Opera Orchestra under the baton of maestro Pavel Klinichev, the Swan Lake was choreographed by Yuri Grigorovich and featured approximately 100 dancers performing on stage in a visual treat to the audience. Beautifully interpreting the tragic love story of Princess Odette and Prince Siegfried to exquisite perfection, Olga Smirnova and Semyon Chudin gave their best performances.

The story revolves around Princess Odette who is a white swan by day and human by night, but has to await an oath of true love to break the curse. However, in a cruel twist of fate, the scheming sorcerer Van Rothbart deceives her true love – Prince Siegfried into breaking his vow to Odette with

his evil daughter, Odile. Olga Smirnova, captivated the audience by playing the dual persona to perfection. While as Odette, she conveyed her sadness through her graceful, sad and alluring body language, the ballerina stunned everyone with her performance of the dark counterpart Odile with strong and clean movements.



Semyon Chudin, who is the Principal Dancer with the Bolshoi Ballet portraying a tormented Prince Siegfried delivered his feelings evocatively. His movements invoked the Prince's struggle between love and attraction to Odette and his bewitchment by Odile. Led astray by The Evil Genius and the mourning of the death of Odette, his performance touched everyone in the audience.

Swan Lake which originally premiered in 1877 was streamlined into two acts by the choreographer each with scenes transitioning between dreamlike fantasy and brutal reality. The two and half hour performance also had exquisitely designed set and costumes combined with the unparalleled virtuosity of Russia's great Bolshoi Ballet. The 237-year old classical ballet company Bolshoi Ballet has achieved worldwide acclaim and is recognised as one of the foremost ballet companies in Russia. Founded by Imperial officer Prince Pyotr Urusov in 1776 after Empress Catherine the Great granted permission to arrange performances in Moscow, the Bolshoi Ballet has had a long and thrilling history. Today, the Ballet Company employs over 3,000 people within its opera and orchestra and over 200 dancers, and technical and administrative staff.



RUSSIA-SINGAPORE JAZZ SYMPHONIA

A rare and oh-so-cool collaboration of Russia's and Singapore's great musicians



It was a landmark in the popular Singapore jazz scene. The Russia-Singapore Jazz Symphonia was one of the most anticipated musical events. The evening of 29 November 2013, saw the best musicians of Singapore and the crème de la crème of the Russian jazz greats performing a double feature of a Jazz Sextet and Symphony Orchestra together.

Delighting a packed audience who had gathered at the School of the Arts (SOTA), Singapore's veteran jazz pianist Jeremy Monteiro along with Christy Smith on Bass and Tamagoh on Drums joined hands with Russia's finest and internationally renowned Jazz Saxophonist Igor Butman and Ace Trumpeter Vadim Eilenkrig. The lush exuberant energy of the jazz combo and symphonic jazz blended beautifully together and sophistication of an orchestra's grand sound with the virtuosity, spontaneity and verve of jazz performed by a small ensemble was well appreciated by music aficionados.

The Orchestra performed arrangements written and orchestrated by the world famous composer, Enri Lolashvilli, well-known for his work in blockbuster French and Russian movies (2013 music for the film "Rasputin" with Gerard Depardieu and Fanni Ardant, 2000 "Tender Age", 2007 "Liquidation"). The first half of the concert saw the jazz musicians on stage performing together with a full symphonic orchestra and played some improvised jazz music. The line-

up included three of Monteiro's original pieces - Overture in C, Olympia, and Another Time, Another Place - as well as a nine-part symphonic suite by Russian composer Enri Lolashvilli titled Nostalgia.

Handpicked Musicians

Featuring the Young Musicians' Foundation Orchestra, the Symphonic Jazz was handpicked by Maestro Darrell Ang and conducted by Sergey Skripka, the celebrated and respected conductor of the Russian State Orchestra of Cinematography. His last name, by an uncanny coincidence, means "violin" in Russian and underscores his musical passion.

Treated to the rare and unique collaboration, music aficionados enjoyed a night of lively music that flowed out as smoothly as a well matured French wine. The event brought together the most respected Singaporean and Russian musicians and highlighted the warm ties of friendship and cultural bond between the large multi-national

ethnic geographic diversity of Russia and almost equally diverse melting pot of cultures in the small geography of Singapore.

The Russia-Singapore Jazz Symphonia was an accomplishment and a rare collaboration in Island City's musical scene. A true melodic kaleidoscope of contrasting moods and colours that wowed the audience, the Jazz Symphonia proved to be an inspirational, energising experience that proved that the universal language of music was beyond borders or cultural differences.

The rare collaboration was brought by RusSing Holdings and produced by Twise (S) Pte Ltd, under the musical direction of Jeremy Monteiro, with the support of Michael Tay, Director of Singapore Foundation for Arts and Culture, and Embassy of The Russian Federation in Singapore. Some of the proceeds from the sale of the concert tickets were donated to Singapore Repertory Theatre Student Education Fund.

Russian Colours Concert at the Esplanade



While the powerful work of Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Rachmaninoff may well have more bombastic force when played by a full orchestra, Russian Colours, at the Esplanade Recital Studio is all about intimacy, featuring classical music from Russian masters performed by two high-profile musicians at a prominent venue like the Esplanade Recital Studio on 19 March 2014. Singaporean violinist Tee Khoon Tang and English Pianist Sam Haywood have played together many times since they were colleagues at Prussia Cove, UK and they complement each other perfectly.



WELCOME TO 11.12 ART GALLERY

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TRAINING IN A RUSSIAN TALL SHIP

Singapore Polytechnic maritime course students get a taste of life at sea on board the famous sail ship Pallada



H.E. Leonid P. Moiseev, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation in Singapore, might have noted with a smile that there were 13 girls (and just three guys) from the Singapore Polytechnic with almost 30 Russian male cadets smartly lined up on deck to welcome him on board the sail training ship STS Pallada on 7 March 2014.

The Singapore students were the first of two batches of students from the Polytechnic's maritime courses who have joined the Russian cadets in a special training programme organised by the Polytechnic and the Far Eastern State Technical Fisheries (FESTF) University of Vladivostok, which owns the ship. They were going to experience 'life at sea' on a tall mast ship departing that day for a four-day trip to cross the equator and back before leaving with the next batch of students on 11 March to travel to its next stop, Muara in Brunei on 17 March.

Before they set sail, the ship's Captain Nikolay Zorchenko brought the Ambassador and some of the students' parents on a tour of the 126.8 metre

long ship. The students were very enthusiastic about the trip and Maritime Management student, Lim Jia Yang, said she and her classmates are really looking forward to learning and working on board the ship. For the first voyage, most of the students are from the poly's maritime management and business courses, which might explain the preponderance of girls and the second trip will have more nautical studies and engineering students.

The Ambassador and parents were shown the students' sleeping quarters, classrooms and mess. There was also a meal served of fish, borsch and barley rice. Parents and student, Nurul Fatina gave thumbs up for the food which they rate as "delicious." One of the parents, Mr Mazlan Harun, who is a former sea captain, said he was very impressed by the ship's size and level of equipment which has been retrofitted with engines and includes the latest state-of-the-art navigational electronic systems, which he said is so important for safety at sea. He also hoped that, "I think the experience will make my daughter Lydia, be more independent."

In a conversation with Opportunity Russia, Captain Zorchenko said the students will be exposed to important sea faring skills such as ropework, basic sailing drills, maintenance work (like painting) and watch keeping. The training programme keeps students busy all day and everyday. After they wake up, they go for training, then they go on deck and finish maintenance work; when the weather is good, sometimes the ship stops and they do painting on the sides. For this trip, he said, "There is an old maritime tradition about celebrating crossing the Equator for the first time with a special fun ceremony as well as awarding a certificate for the crossing."

The Captain said, "I have worked over 20 years as master of the ship. Over the last six years, we have travelled to Singapore and there is a very good relationship between the FESTF University and the Singapore Polytechnic. This training programme is very good for me, our crew and our cadets and offers a unique opportunity for our young generations to make friends and understand each other."

Singapore Polytechnic Senior Lecturer, Captain Frederick James Francis, was also there to see his students off. He said, "The relationship started when our Singapore Polytechnic team visited Russia in 2007 for the Festival of University Games and participated in the Young Captains of the World's Oceans competition. When we were there, we had the opportunity to sail on the Pallada, that's when it all started." He said the training on the ship provided students with a holistic learning experience and they get to meet people from different cultures. "They get a chance to be on a tall ship and observe how it is run – from the bridge to the engine room. The students are inspired and in a way, it is a once-in-a-lifetime-chance as we don't think we can get a tall ship of our own – it would be too expensive."

Pallada left Brunei on 19 March to head on its final course to the port of Pusan in South Korea before returning home. Just like on her previous voyages, she leaves behind Singapore students richer in memories and experience and the greatest feeling of adventure they seldom get except on a tall sailing ship.

BUYAN – BEST OF RUSSIAN FOOD & HOSPITALITY

Cuisine and culture come together at this restaurant at Duxton Hill

Russian food lovers in Singapore will tell you there are less than a handful of restaurants where you can experience true Russian food. Buyan is on the top two of this list. Popular with the Russian diplomatic and business community, it is also a favoured place for Singapore companies holding corporate functions and events. While ambience and location favours it well, the heart of the restaurant is the warm welcome, diners receive.

Buyan's menu offers authentic dishes from Russia and the former Soviet Union so there is variety here to cater to any craving, ranging from great homey stews to opulent blinis with caviar. This is the very place where you can try the real taste of the world-reknown Russian borsch, pirozhki (small pies) or pelmeni (dough pockets filled with mixed meat).

Must Try Medovukha

Buyan's bar boasts a distinctive selection of vodkas, both clear and fruit-based house infusions made following the recipes from a cook-book dating back to the early 18th century. The Medovukha infused vodka shown here is based on honey and spices. These infusions, with flavours as exotic as horseradish and cloudberry, are rapidly gaining in popularity among Singaporeans and the expatriate crowd alike.

This appreciation for Russian food also extends to companies that want to try something new or different as Buyan has held functions at the restaurant and catered to companies such as SIA, Channel, Gazprom and several embassies et al. The restaurant is also a favourite choice in the media scene as both venue and location backdrop for interviews and television series.

A great choice of different craft beers including Ukrainian, Polish and Czech labels is available at the restaurant as well as other premium spirits.

Wine devotees can satiate their connoisseurs' palates with exquisite vertical vintages of the top chateaux from Bordeaux, highly sought after domaines from Burgundy and the best producers of the Rhone Valley. Wine lovers who look for interesting labels, passionate small producers and unknown wine regions of France, Eastern Europe and Soviet countries, will be overjoyed with Buyan selections.



Signature Dishes

Borscht, the traditional vegetable soup is made not only with pork but also beef, lamb, ham, sausage, chicken, duck's flesh, goose, or just bone broth (without meat). The vegetable part is no less diverse but the beet becomes the heart and soul of this soup.

Pelmeni are little pockets of noodle dough that can be filled with meat, fish, mushrooms, vegetables or even berries. But according to the traditional recipe there should be three kinds of meat: mutton, beef and pork.

Pirozhki (smaller Pirogi) are variously filled pockets of dough which is truly a national heritage dish of Russia. It is filled with everything from the garden, the barn, the field, the forest and the pond can provide. The dough for Russian pies must always be raised - yeast-leavened. It is puffed several times and thoroughly kneaded in between to produce a batch that is fluffy and light.

Beefstroganov is made with the very best cuts of beef, sour cream, mushrooms, and onion, and served with mashed potato.

Blini are light pancakes and is one of Russia's most popular foods. They have a very special texture, which is soft, friable, porous, fluffy and light, all rolled into one. Like a sponge, they absorb the melted butter, sour cream and become mellow, shiny and tasty. Blini must be eaten hot and can be served as zakuski (starters) with caviar or meat filling, or as a desert, when taken with honey, jam, sour cream or condensed milk.



Medovukha

More Information

For reservations and inquiries for additional services (events gathering, catering and fine wine sales) please contact tel: +65 6223 7008 or email: info@buyan.sg. Buyan Russian Restaurant & Caviar Bar is located at 10 Duxton Hill, Singapore 089593. Website: www.buyan.sg



RUSSIA

The largest country in the world, Russia shares land borders with Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia, and North Korea. The country shares maritime borders with Japan by the Sea of Okhotsk, and the U.S. state of Alaska across the Bering Strait

OFFICIAL NAME

Russian Federation

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

41° and 82° North, 19° East and 169° West

AREA & POPULATION

17,098.2 thousand km² & 143,369.8 thousand people

CAPITAL

Moscow

FEDERAL DISTRICTS (ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE)

Eight federal districts: Central (Moscow); Southern (Rostov-on-Don), Northwestern (St Petersburg), Far Eastern (Khabarovsk), Siberian (Novosibirsk), Ural (Yekaterinburg), Volga (Nizhny Novgorod) and North Caucasian (Pyatigorsk).

MAJOR CITIES

Moscow, St Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg and Nizhny Novgorod

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Russian

RELIGION

Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism

CLIMATE

Humid continental climate dominates most of Russia. Northern European Russia and Siberia has a subarctic climate, with extremely severe winters. There are only two distinct seasons in most of the territories in Russia—winter and summer; the coldest month is January and the warmest usually is July.

ECONOMY

Unit of Currency: Russian Ruble

1USD – Approx. 31.5 Russian Ruble

The Russian economy is the world's ninth largest by nominal GDP

GDP per capita - \$17,709 (2012 est.)

Foreign currency reserves – US\$460,058.17 (Feb 2013)

EDUCATION

Russia has a free education system guaranteed for all citizens by the Constitution. There is a great emphasis on science and technology in education, Russian medical, mathematical, scientific and aerospace research is generally of a high order. The oldest and largest Russian universities are Moscow State University and St Petersburg State University.

CULTURE

Over 160 different ethnic groups and indigenous peoples. Ethnic Russians with their Slavic Orthodox traditions, Tatars and Bashkirs with their Turkic Muslim culture, Buddhist nomadic Buryats and Kalmyks; shamanistic peoples of the Extreme North and Siberia, highlanders of the Northern Caucasus, Finno-Ugric peoples of the Russian North West and Volga Region contribute to the country's rich cultural diversity.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Major tourist routes in Russia include a journey around the Golden Ring of ancient cities, cruises on the big rivers like the Volga, and long journeys on the famous Trans-Siberian Railway. The most visited destinations in Russia are Moscow and St Petersburg, the current and the former capitals of the country.

Embassy of Russia in Singapore Consular Services

The Consular Section of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Singapore is open for visitors on weekdays from 10 am to 12 am at 51 Nassim Road.

Essential information on Russian visa application procedures, requirements and fees, as well as on legalisation of documents and notary services provided by the embassy can be found at www.singapore.mid.ru/consular_selection.htm

Singapore nationals require visas for travel to Russia. For more information on visa eligibility and requirements, visit: www.singapore.mid.ru/Visa_Information.htm



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Congratulations to Russia on your National Day!

Best wishes from the National University Hospital, Singapore

The National University Health System (NUHS) was established in January 2008 and consists of the National University Hospital (NUH), National University of Singapore's Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, Faculty of Dentistry and the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health. As Singapore's first Academic Medical Centre (AMC), we aim to bring together the tripartite mission of excellence in clinical care, translational clinical research and education.

The NUH is a tertiary referral centre for a comprehensive range of medical, surgical and dental specialties and it also houses the national centres of Cardiology (National University Heart Centre, Singapore) and Oncology (National University Cancer Institute, Singapore). The Hospital also provides full organ transplant programmes for both children and adults (in kidney, liver and pancreas) and is the only hospital in Singapore with separate adult and paediatric emergency care facilities.

In 2004, the NUH became the first Singapore hospital to receive the Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, an international stamp for excellent clinical practices in patient care and safety. In 2013, the hospital again became the first Singapore hospital to attain the new Academic Medical Centre (AMC) accreditation, which was recently introduced in January 2013.

If you are living in Singapore and would like to know more about how you and your family can access our medical services, please feel free to contact our Patient Liaison Centre.



Members of the NUHS Group



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